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Death Trip 2001

Made friends, made enemies, and almost died
~can't wait to go back!

Me battling vile olthoi insects in Marae Lassel

~ claw from nearly lost arm

My millionth pyreal coin ~ ah... the joy of being a monarch

Note to Self:
Olthoi bred deadlier than last month

Gauze from wound on nearly lost arm

My house, Southern Osteth

Dusk lily from my 2nd trip to Marae Lassel

purchased in March

Weapons stored here:
~Quiddity Sword
~Pyreal Axe

My precious focusing stone allows me to, well, focus.

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
ANIMATED VIOLENCE
BLOOD

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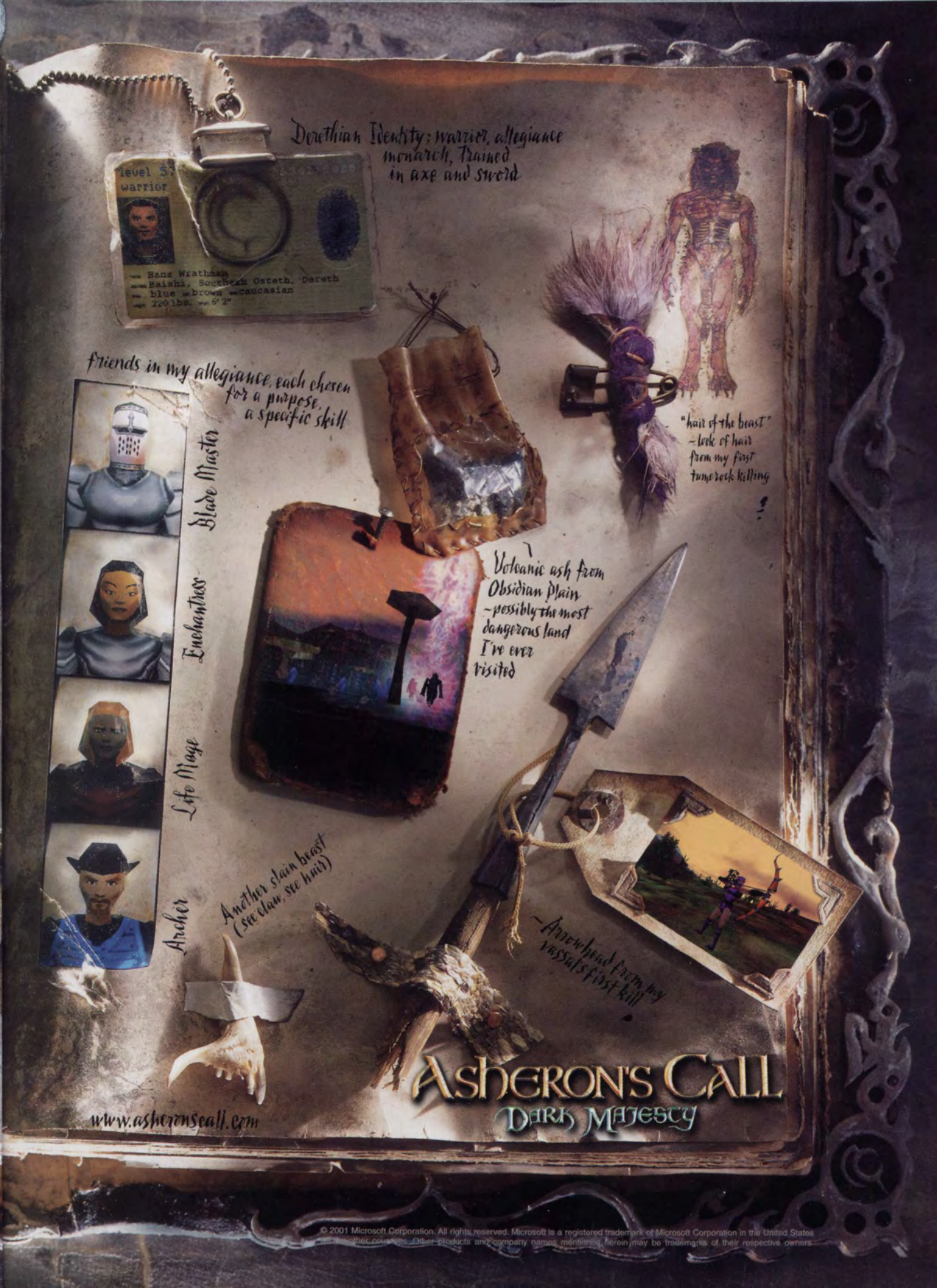
Dorethian Identity; warrior, allegiance monarch, Trained in axe and sword
level 57
warrior
Bans Wrathmaw
Baishi, Southern Osteth, Dereth
blue brown caucasian
220 lbs. 6' 2"
friends in my allegiance, each chosen for a purpose, a specific skill
Blade Master
Enchantress
Life Mage
Archer
"hair of the beast" ~lock of hair from my first tumerock killing
Volcanic ash from Obsidian Plain ~possibly the most dangerous land I've ever visited
Another slain beast (see claw, see hair)
~Arrowhead from my vassal's first kill
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Jon Foster has been widely published in the gaming industry, and it's an honor to have the opportunity to see his interpretation of this adventuring monk.

—Peter Whitley

PAGODA OF CONTENTS

DRAGON Issue #289 • November 2001 • Volume XXVII, Number 6

CHAPTER ONE: GAME ROOM

8 **Wyrm's Turn**
Where do NPCs come from?

12 **Scale Mail**

26 **Convention Calendar**
Get conned.

28 **Up On A Soapbox**
The oral tradition continues.

32 **Dork Tower**

CHAPTER TWO: FEATURES

36 **BLACK-CLAD ASSASSINS**
Not hatched by magical chickens, as popularly believed. Find out the truth about ninjas here.

46 **SILENT WARRIORS**
So you want to be a ninja? Here are three new ninja prestige classes.

56 **LEVELED TREASURES**
You might never outgrow another weapon.

60 **FLYING LEAPS, DEADLY SILKS**
Find out what the great wuxia flicks are and where to find them.

66 **THUNDER AND FIRE**
Gargantuan is almost a big enough word to describe these monstrosities.

76 **PLAYFUL PHOENIX FIST VS. FOUR SCHOLARS BOXING**
We almost named this article Walking Duck Lich Slap but then thought better of it.

80 **CLASS COMBOS**
What do you get when you cross a fighter with a monk? No, not a figonk.

CHAPTER THREE: FAMILIARS

86 **Mind Flayers**
Helm of Intelligence, to my aid!

88 **Cities of the Ages: Paris**
Bon appetite, monsieur!

94 **Rogues Gallery: Sembia**
The villains of Black Wolf.

100 **Elminster's Guide to the Realms**
Alleys—not just for getting jumped anymore!

104 **Bazaar of the Bizarre**
Magic cups? Sure, why not!

108 **Nodwick**

CHAPTER FOUR: WIZARDS WORKSHOP

110 **Chainmail**
Skirmish. Not just for breakfast anymore.

112 **Role Models**
Tip #1: Lift the miniature with your legs, not your back.

114 **The Play's the Thing**
You know the rules, now develop your style.

116 **Sage Advice**
Don't skip Skip. He might save your character's life.

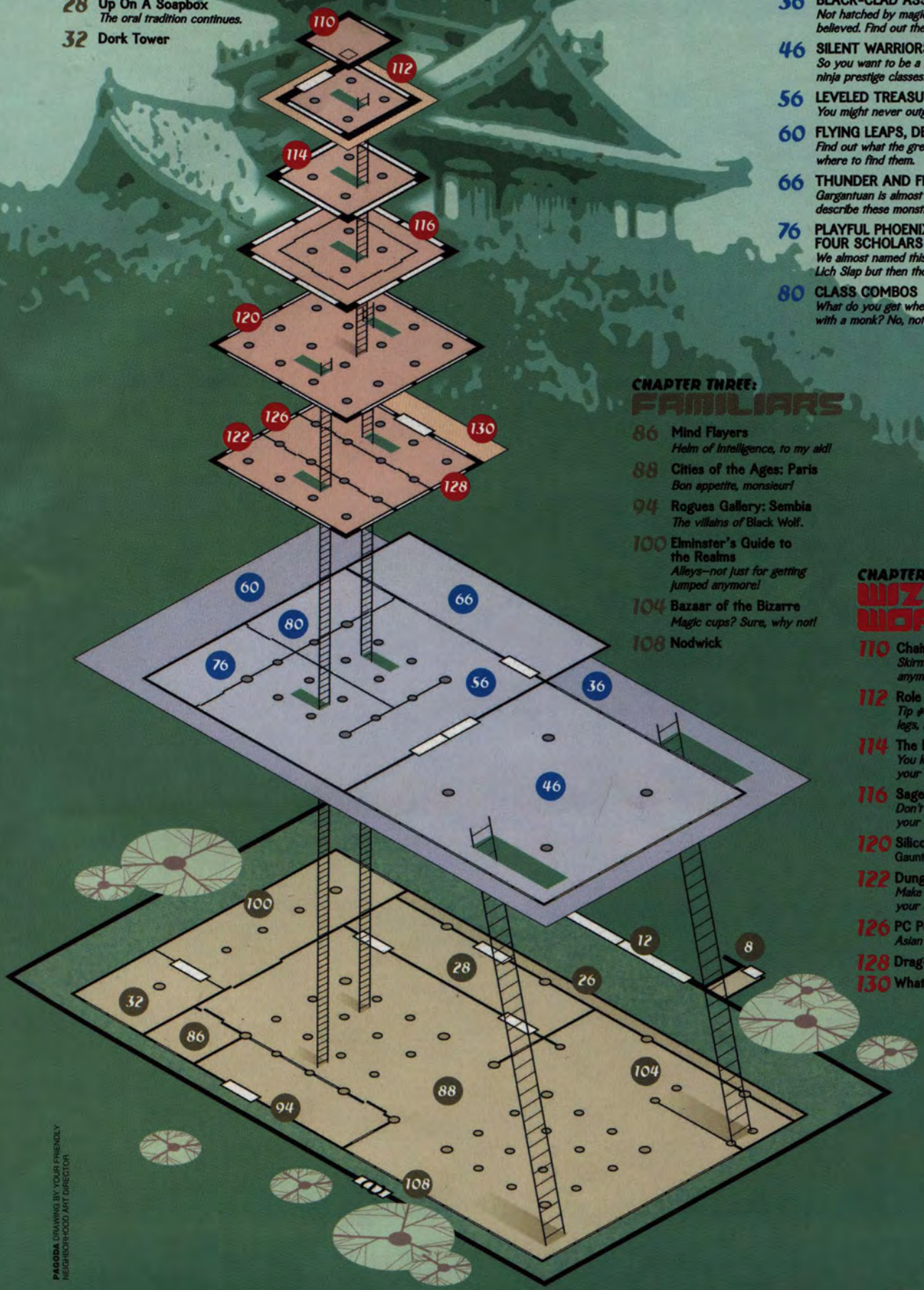
120 **Silicon Sorcery**
Gauntlet, *it's back and in your game.*

122 **Dungeoncraft**
Make your NPCs as believable as your characters.

126 **PC Portraits**
Asian adventurers for any setting.

128 **Dragonmirth**

130 **What's New?**



PAGODA DRAWING BY YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD ART DIRECTOR

the meek shall inherit the earth BUT NOT DOMINARIA

Sylvan Might
1
Instant
Target creature gets +2/+2 and gains trample until end of turn.
Flashback 2
(You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)

Kamahl, Pit Fighter
4
Creature — Barbarian Legend
Haste
: Kamahl, Pit Fighter deals 3 damage to target creature or player.
"I didn't come to play. I came to win."
6/1

Seize the Day
3
Sorcery
Untap target creature. After this phase, there is an additional combat phase followed by an additional main phase.
Flashback 2
(You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)

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JEREMY JARVIS

Going NPC

My time as art director of *Dragon Magazine* has been a lot like a good D&D campaign. We play every day, often on weekends and, although players come and go, the missions stay the same—to smite the mighty Dreadline.

Our small squad of high-level specialists fearlessly travels deep into the Dreadline's lair each month. Through the luck of high rolls and creative focus, we emerge with our colorful trophy and a tad more experience. Jesdeck the Healer leads us into the steaming maw with a fanatical devotion to a casualty-free mission. The uncompromising paladin, Sir Nett, applies order to the chaos with swaths of red and esoteric principles found only in the arcane histories of Skunk and White. The mysterious Fio silently volunteers to explore the darkest passages for the smallest anomaly. I, lacking wisdom (and some may claim charisma), specialize in illusions that can, on a good day, fool the eye and befuddle the brain. Our patron John (Son of Will) and his advisors brief us periodically on recent sightings of the nefarious Dreadline and equip us with whatever tools they have at their disposal.

Rather than bore you with the details of our characters, I write with another purpose in mind. I have grown tired of spewing my *color sprays* and *hypnotic patterns* and feel that it's time to go NPC. This weird caster is retiring from the adventuring life for the time being. The party, with its lucrative and regular assignments, will undoubtedly find a capable ventriloquist to meet its needs. The job is glamorous but dangerous, and by the time this missive reaches your eyes, that person will no doubt be identified.

As part of the hearty team, I delved into the cavernous pit of doom fifteen times and each foray emerged victorious. Bards tell the tales to drunken would-be historians of a day when our missions were identified by a completely different heraldic mark. That was not the only difference between those days and these, but I won't try your patience with my deeds. Instead, if you have the means, please look back to the journals of yesteryear and compare the methods of our madness. I trust you would find that I, as the party's illusionist, would be worthy of sharing the glory of our endeavors and not, as it may have seemed at first, the ruiner of all things good.

Our missions can unanimously be described as dungeon crawls. The highs and lows can be found in the journals of our deeds. For example, the cover of issue #275 was my favorite, while I may never live down my claim to clothe the scantily-clad babes of days gone by. Lo, the outcry was deafening. While we witnessed a feral halfling spill orc brains across the page, we also saw the wondrous and deadly creatures of Shannara just one mission later. I would like to believe the entire mission became cleaner, easier, and more worthwhile . . . but I might just be a delusional old fool in a burlap codpiece.

Perhaps you care little what I plan on doing with my time, but I'll tell you nonetheless: After I quaff a few stiff flagons of mead down at Old Trotty's Chainmail Bikini, I'm going to go NPC. Now, save your tears; it's not as bad as you think. An NPC's life is one of leisure and reflection, two activities that I adore.

So, as if Dave Gross and I misread cues, I also am leaving *Dragon Magazine*. It is in incredibly capable hands, and I know that Decker-and-crew have big plans for the publication . . . good plans, exciting plans, ambitious plans. I'm going from art director to subscriber, and with the newfound time in my life, I plan on actually playing again.

It's been a good time and an honor to have such dedicated and attentive readers as yourself.

Thanks, and roll high!

Pete

Peter Whitley, Art Director

Special thanks to all of the excellent artists that I've had the priviledge of working with, to *Dragon's* inspired and uncompromising editorial staff, and my wife, Jennifer, and sons, Jacob and Levi, for being so patient with me on the long nights of production.

DRAGON

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SCALE MAIL

Response to issue #287 has been almost unanimously good, but the Shannara issue still seems to draw either high praise or harsh condemnation.

Lots of folks are asking about back issues, putting articles on the web, and how they can get hard-to-find material from DRAGON. *All we can say now is that it's okay to look online for back issues (starting with the Wizards' website isn't a bad choice), but it's not okay to put material from* DRAGON *online.*

Brain Food

One of the really great things about the rules in the new edition of D&D is the chapter in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* on Dungeon Mastering. The "Changing The Rules" section is one of the best things that the authors could have included. I really appreciate how the authors have communicated the flexibility of the game's rules and the importance of game balance. It accomplishes one of the basic intents of role-playing, and it encourages creativity and imagination.

Once I had finished reading all of the core rulebooks and the supplements, I decided to alter the rules for spellcasting classes to create a world of "high magic" as suggested on page 164 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide.* The result was a world that enables high-level spellcasters to become particularly fearsome and allows even low- and mid-level characters to be more dangerous than normal. Although it has not been playtested at length, I was very satisfied with the initial results, and my friends that played these classes had a great time with them too! NPCs and monsters also follow the variant rules I've invented and create slightly more difficult challenges for my players. I'm sure I will have to adjust the rules as different circumstances arise, and I consider my house rules to be a "work in progress."

I suspect there are many other campaigns out there that alter rules to suit the imaginations of the DM, players, and campaign world to make it more fun or interesting. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank the game designers at Wizards of the Coast who continue to promote creativity and openmindedness in the minds of their audience. In a world rife with passive entertainment and people who want instant satisfaction, these authors have engaged both sides of my brain, and that is definitely something I value.

Bill Pomares • Norwich, NY

More Bang for your Buck

In a recent issue of *DUNGEON Magazine,* a reader computed the cost of a subscription to the magazine based on pennies per page. He found it a remarkably good deal. Intrigued, I decided to do this for *DRAGON Magazine,* both past and future.

In 1978, a yearly subscription to *DRAGON* was $18.00 (this information is from the editor in *DRAGON* #12). At that time, *DRAGON* had just moved to a monthly schedule and averaged about forty pages per issue. That comes to approximately 3.75 cents per page.

Today, an early-bird renewer choosing to renew by mail for three years pays $75.00 for those three years, or $25.00 per year. On average, *DRAGON Magazine* runs about 110 pages long these days.

On the surface, you'd think that this was an increase of 38.89%, or about 1.4% per year, remarkably low. But what about per page?

My subscription to *DRAGON* is costing me about 1.9 cents per page. Over a twenty-three year period, the cost of one page of *DRAGON* has actually *decreased* by about 50%! Heck, when you take inflation into account as well as the increase in quality, it's darn near free!

I love the magazine. Keep up the good work!

Tyler Jones • Phoenix, AZ

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PREVIEWS DRAGON #290

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number of times my campaign has gone in a different direction than I expected, and in going back through past issues of *Dragon*, I found inspiration in an article that I had thought useless at the time it came out.

One last thing. There were some complaints about gory artwork that I want to address. Playing this game at the kitchen table with dice and paper has desensitized us from the violence inherent in this game. Anyone who has seen *Braveheart* knows how gory fights fought with swords and axes can be, and that was a PG version of a battle! D&D is a violent game. What do you think happens when you roll a critical hit? The monster doesn't just suffer a couple of bruises. No one is going to be traumatized for life after seeing a watercolor rendition of an ogre laying there with its head caved in. It actually lends a touch of realism to the game.

D&D is not a game for people with weak stomachs. Remember that picture next time you kill a monster, and if that bothers you, maybe you should find another hobby. Might I suggest needlepoint?

Brad Smith • Bloomington, IN

FORUM continues next page.

with D&D facts and arcane tidbits.

I hadn't recalled my gaming memories for years. After college I moved on to a family and career. Forgotten were the long nights of fighting goblins and hordes of undead with my friends. Gone were the nights filled with the hope of finding untold treasures and magic items. Coming across your publication on the magazine racks brought all those memories flooding back.

That same afternoon my thirteen-year-old son told me of a store he and his friends frequented that carried a number of gaming magazines. Sure enough, it was a store that catered to roleplaying and other hobby games. He and I spent hours among the trappings of my past. He was amazed that his father could ever have been cool enough to play these games.

Thank you *Dragon* for still being the best D&D source, for all the good memories you brought back, and for adding one more thing for a son and father to share in a world where common ties are becoming harder and harder to find.

Bob L. Rush • Stillwater, OK

Welcome back.

Gnolls? That's Weird.

I am eagerly anticipating the release of D&D Chainmail! I've invested in some miniatures games in the past, but found it both costly and time consuming to purchase and paint a decent army.

I love D&D, and a miniatures game based upon D&D hits me as a splendid idea! The relatively small warbands and short game time also work nicely for college students such as myself who have limited time and funds. Previews of the D&D Chainmail game have made me gain a strange fondness for gnolls, although I am not sure that's a healthy thing.

The articles in *Dragon* #285 and #286 were excellent! The history of the Sundered Empire greatly appeals to me, and the sidebars with D&D information are really useful. Are there any intentions to release a Sundered Empire sourcebook for D&D in the future? Or are the characters fairly easy to convert to D&D since Chainmail uses the d20 System with just minor alterations? Also, will the boxed set contain information on all the armies, or will we have to wait for later supplements?

Thanks for taking the time to answer my questions. It looks like I'll be investing in some paint!

Shaun Welch • Jacksonville, Florida

The D&D Chainmail group plans to do some sourcebooks that will include more background information, but we don't yet know how they'll choose to organize those books or what exactly they'll contain. Personally, I like the Naresh faction (see page 110).

The Guys with Guns are Happy!

I want to thank the *Dragon* staff for providing such a great magazine. As a military dependent living overseas, your magazine is one of my few links to the English-speaking gaming world. In spite of all of the negative input I know you get, you have never disappointed me.

I've been reading *Dragon* for some time, but I never got excited enough to write in—until now. When my brother noticed that the next issue would cover Terry Brooks's world of Shannara, I was torn between excitement and trepidation. You see, I'm a huge Shannara fan. I own all the books. When other people convert my beloved books to other

Nodwick
by Aaron Williams
UM, EXCUSE ME, BUT I'M A LITTLE LOST...
YIPE! AN ADVENTURER! I'M DOOMED!!
ER, I'M A HENCHMAN, ACTUALLY. MY EMPLOYERS HAD ME SCOUT OUT A TUNNEL ON LEVEL TWO. IT HAD A PIT TRAP THAT DUMPED ME HERE. I'M JUST...
SPARE MY POOR, MISERABLE SELF FROM YOUR MIGHTY HAND!
YEAH, SURE. IF YOU COULD JUST POINT ME TOWARDS THE NEAREST...
OH, I HAVE SEEN MY LAST SUNRISE! DEATH'S BLADE SURELY FALLS UPON ME THIS DAY!!
GUARD DUTY ISN'T YOUR REGULAR GIG, IS IT?
YOU'D BE SUPRISED HOW LITTLE USE A KOBOLD TRIBE HAS FOR AN ECONOMICS MAJOR...

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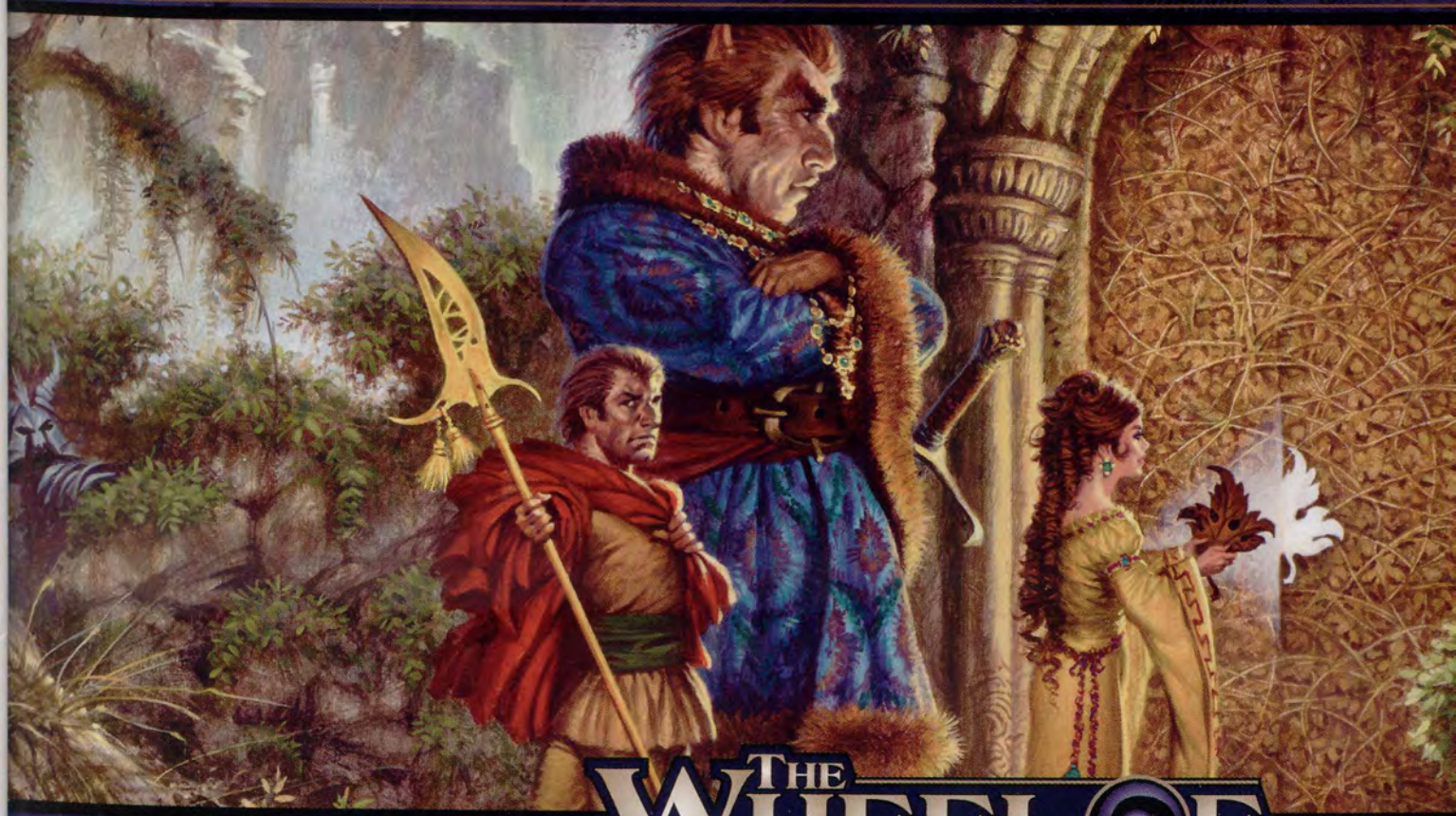

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NIX THE NITPICKING

I have been a regular reader of *Dragon Magazine* for a very long time as well as an avid D&D player for over 20 years now, and I am just amazed at the seemingly endless onslaught of letters I read month after month of trivial complaints about the magazine, such as the artwork and the fonts being used throughout the magazine.

Personally, I think that the artwork is fantastic and the use of special fonts that set off certain blocks of text add to the aesthetic quality of the magazine, giving it an "otherworldy" medieval feel.

Many people have also complained about your cover headline, "Warriors Kick Ass" from issue #275. It amazes me that in this day so many people would take umbrage at such minor profanity as that.

To the people complaining about your portrayals of certain races (namely, the halflings in issue #285), you are forgetting one of the basic rules of being a DM. The beauty of D&D (or roleplaying games in general) is that unlike other games, we are not absolutely constrained to the rules as written. As a DM, you are well within your rights to pick and choose the rules you want and implement them as you see fit. Just because you read them in *Dragon* doesn't make those rules "law." Nothing in the magazine must be taken literally. Rather, the articles are guidelines meant to provide you with ideas.

A number of people have also written in to express their disgust with the inclusion of articles that are useless to them. These people must remember that there are thousands of other gamers out there with a myriad of playing styles and a multitude of different campaign worlds. This magazine isn't written solely for you. Even I can appreciate the fact that just because an article doesn't appeal to me doesn't mean it isn't gold for someone else. Many times I have found almost entire issue useless to me. But I can't tell you the

there need to be a certain amount of time after the newsstand release of an issue? Can your articles be posted in .pdf format on someone's website?

One response to my post even mentioned that another member of the Wizard's message boards had gotten the right to write a foreign (German, I think) version of your magazine and that this person has even secured copyright privileges. Again, I am unsure as to what is true and what is rumor, but I would really like to know, and I'm sure this information would be helpful to a number of people who want to make sure they aren't doing anything illegal. Thanks!

Name and Address withheld

Giving away Dragon *content on the Internet (or anywhere else) is against the law. Sharing the contents of the magazine with a group of friends so that you can incorporate the material into your game is certainly okay (we like that a lot), but other publication is not. I know that many fans are frustrated by their inability to get back issues, and we're always willing to explore the possibility of electronic reproductions and compilations. For now, try to pick up the issues you need from the many reliable electronic retailers out there.*

Fans who know of a reliable online retailer that has back issues should post a link to our message boards to help those who haven't yet found a source of back issues.

Old Habits Die Hard

I am an avid D&D player, and I must admit that I don't really care for the new edition. Unfortunately, all of your articles in the magazines are devoted to it. My friends and I are starting to think that you might be trying make us convert to the new edition so that the company makes more money!

There are a number of people that still play 2nd Edition. If you don't begin including articles for that edition, I think you'll begin to lose some of these subscribers. You'll certainly lose my subscription as well as those of my friends. I'm sure you don't want that. All we ask is that you don't kill 2nd Edition completely. Perhaps if you just devoted an article or two in each issue to 2nd Edition?

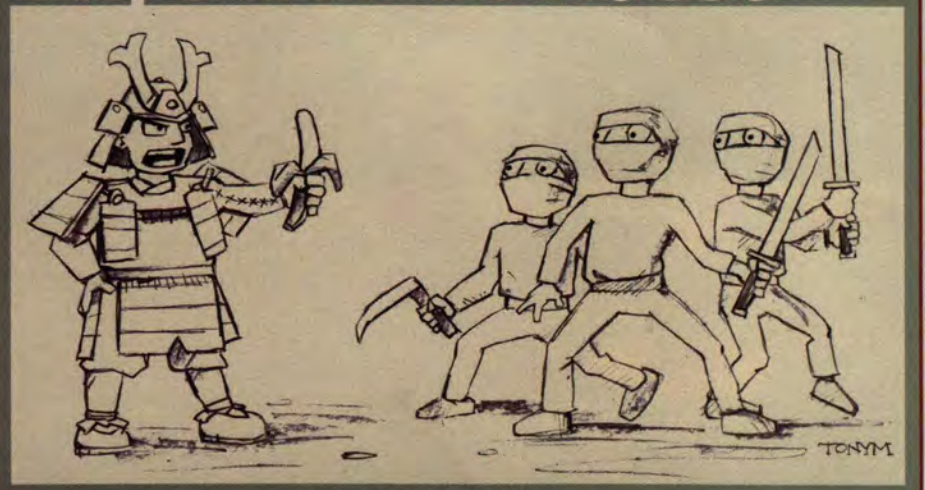
Adam Long • Address withheld

Dragon Magazine *has made no secret of the fact that it's now totally devoted to the new edition. But we think the ideas in the magazine are worth converting back into that other game system, so feel free to convert any articles you wish.*

No Place Like Home

I was browsing through the magazine section at my local bookstore when the headline *Dragon* caught my attention. My first thoughts were, can this be true? Is this the same wonderful tome of knowledge that I remembered from my college days in the '70s? Yes, it was! It was like coming home as I perused those wonderful pages filled

caption contest



Go beyond just "funny looking" and **WRITE A CAPTION** for this cartoon and send it to Caption/Dragon Magazine, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057 by January 1st. Cutting up your magazine won't earn you any favors, but you can send in a photocopy with your entry if you want to be professional about it.

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PREVIEWS PUBLICATIONS

NOVEMBER

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ISBN: 0-7869-1855-1

Lords of Darkness
A FORGOTTEN REALMS Accessory
by Sean K Reynolds and Jason Carl
$29.95/$41.95 CAN • WTC11989
ISBN: 0-7869-1989-2

Chosen of the Gods
A DRAGONLANCE Novel
by Chris Pierson
$6.99/$9.99 CAN • WTC21902
ISBN: 0-7869-1902-7

Keep on the Borderlands
A GREYHAWK Novel
by Ru Emerson
$6.99/$9.99 CAN • WTC21881
ISBN: 0-7869-1881-0

Black Wolf
A FORGOTTEN REALMS Novel
by Dave Gross
$6.99/$9.99 CAN • WTC21901
ISBN: 0-7869-1901-9

DECEMBER

Song and Silence
A D&D Accessory
by David Noonan and John D. Rateliff
$19.95/$31.95 CAN • WTC11857
ISBN: 0-7869-1857-8

Conundrum
A DRAGONLANCE Novel
by Jeff Crook
$6.99/$9.99 CAN • WTC21949
ISBN: 0-7869-1949-3

The Siege
A FORGOTTEN REALMS Novel
by Troy Denning
$6.99/$9.99 CAN • WTC21905
ISBN: 0-7869-1905-1

I've been leading a game set in the PLANESCAPE setting for most of the past decade. When we heard that PLANESCAPE was getting cut because TSR could no longer support it, we were crushed. The portal to the Cage was being closed behind us. Don't get me wrong; as a proficient DM and decent storyteller, I can and did craft my own storylines. Somehow, though, they were lacking.

Now, with your issue that was devoted to the planes, as well as the *Manual of the Planes* releasing soon, we have some hope that we'll see our way back to the city of Sigil and all our old fiends and enemies.

Speaking more specifically about issue #287, it had a great article about Celestials; any chance for coverage on the other guys? I also enjoyed seeing many of the factions discussed and updated to the new edition, but what about other planar prestige classes? (I wonder what the Lady of Pain looks like through 3rd Edition specs?)

Again, thanks for the wonderful work, and please, bring back the PLANESCAPE setting . . . there are a few "cagers" stuck in Minnesota who want to go home.

Tobias Parks • Address withheld

Get Your Own Mag

For years I've borrowed my friend's copies of *DRAGON Magazine*, but your new format convinced me to get my own subscription a few months ago. I want to say that I love the new changes to the magazine and the game as a whole.

In issue #287 there was mention of your website **www.wizards.com/dragon** and I was overjoyed. An acquaintance had an issue of *DRAGON* that included an article with class combos that I was really disappointed to have missed out on. When I saw the notice about your website, I thought that I might be able to look up the excellent resources from past issues I didn't have access to.

I was disappointed to see that many of your great articles were mentioned but inaccessible. I hope to see these come available on your website soon.

On another note, you have put a few historical cities in past issues, and I loved them. I thought that was the greatest idea. I would especially like to see Rome.

Lastly, I have one complaint. I hate the look of the new halflings! They look like smaller versions of elves. I hope that the ghost of Tolkien haunts the misled person who destroyed this lovable race of sensible, good-natured folk!

Ron Gourley • Chico, CA

Size Matters

I just got the first section of your multi-part map of Faerûn from issue #287. This is a great idea! However, there is no scale visible on the panel. I tried to match it up to the map that came with the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting* book, but it is not an even match. The scale on the map from the book is 120 miles to the inch. The map from the magazine looks like 70 miles to the inch. Could you please tell me what the scale is?

Sheldon Smith • Yonkers, NY

The scale is increased proportionately with the rest of the map. Next issue's map (part 4) contains the accurate scale. If you need to compute distances before then, simply use the scale in the FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting *book and divide the distance measured by four for a rough approximation.*

Breakin' the Law

A number of people on the *DRAGON* message boards have been asking for prestige classes from *DRAGON MAGAZINE* and I don't want anyone to get into trouble if this isn't legal.

I wrote a post to the message boards indicating that this might be considered a copyright infringement, because I believe it is your intellectual property.

Some replies to my post indicated that Wizards of the Coast and/or *DRAGON* had given approval for people to send such information via email.

These same posts also mention that Wizards of the Coast and *DRAGON* do not keep back issues of the magazines for customers to purchase and that they don't necessarily approve of merchants carrying back issues either. In addition, these posts indicate that some of the people on the message boards might not have access to your magazine because they reside in certain countries that can't get it. They cite these as the reasons why they should be able to post prestige classes. What is your official stand on all of these points? Can we exchange prestige classes from your articles? If so, does

BY HOUSE OF YOUNGER

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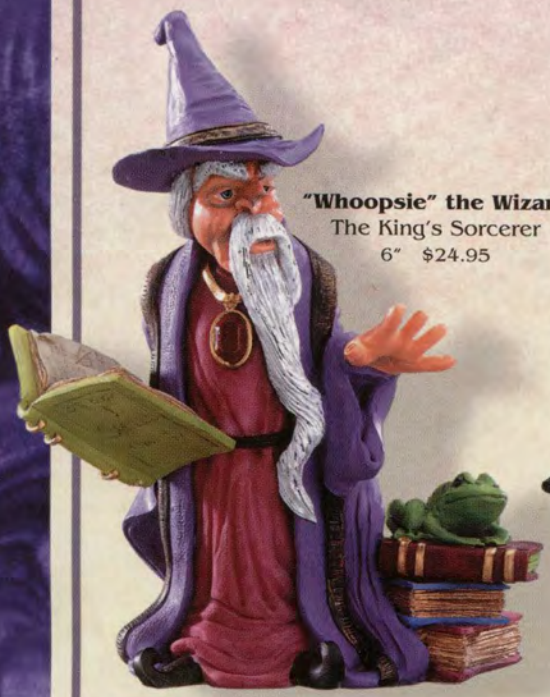

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Scrying Eyes

I'd like to know who on your staff reads minds, because apparently they are very good at it.

It all started the night my party saw their first dragon. We ended the session there, saving the big combat for the following week. The very next day issue #284 arrived in my box, which included an article by Jesse Decker that offers advice on how to make your dragons more deadly foes. My players were not too happy about that. I dismissed this as mere coincidence.

Then, one of the players was thinking about switching characters to a halfling rogue, but didn't like the way they looked. I told him that his halfling didn't have to look the way they have typically been portrayed. A week later, Issue #285 came out, discussing this very thing!

From there things have been escalating. My characters were to fight vampires one week and viola! You put "Vs. Vampires" in issue #286! I couldn't believe it! Finally, to top it all off, my party is now in a situation where they have been pitted against a celestial who is doing not-so-good things for the greater good. And what do I hold in my hands now?—issue #287, which includes an article suggesting this very same plot hook!

I simply cannot believe that this is coincidence anymore. I'm truly happy to contribute my ideas to your great magazine, I just want to know who the mind reader is.

John Welch • Oviedo, FL

Sadly John, we can only read your mind. Keep thinking "rogues" and we'll be there for you next month.

game face

Name: Erik Mona
Alignment: Neutral Lethargic
Class/Level: Editor7/Slack-Ass10* (*prestige class)
Years Gaming: 18 (Years in which that meant "The *Fiend Folio* is a fun coloring book:" 3.)
Favorite Monster: Player characters
Favorite Class: Any class, except bards and rangers
Favorite Setting: GREYHAWK, because grease and blood is better than smoke and mirrors.
Greatest Gaming Moment: Back in highschool, I let my group of players roll up super high-level characters and offered to let them play through the original *Tomb of Horrors*, which none of them had ever seen before. I told them that if they got a half-dozen rooms into it, I'd give their regular characters a boatload of free experience points, but if they died or fled before getting to the sixth room, they had to buy me my own pizza. I ate well that night.

Show us *your* game face. Send a photo and a brief description of your gaming background, including your "vital statistics" (years gaming, your "gaming alignment," favorite race, class, and setting) and a short description of your greatest gaming moment. Keep it all under 100 words, and you might see your mug right here. Send us your game face by post or email it to dragon@wizards.com

Digital DRAGON

I am a D&D fan who just got back into the game with the introduction of the new edition. I have been reading both *DRAGON* and *DUNGEON* for a number of years and I love the new formats!

I also really like the various charts and maps displayed within the magazine, but I wonder if there would be a way to put them on the Internet for download? One way to do this would be to put a code somewhere in the magazine that would allow the buyer to access the same maps and charts on your website. Although there might be some logistical problems with this, I have seen it done for various computer gaming magazines with much success, and I think it's much more practical than photocopying or scanning all my magazines, which can consume a lot of time. It might be a little more work for you, but I'm sure you would make a lot of roleplayers who have Internet connections very happy.

Shawn Carlsen • Vancouver, B.C., Canada

DUNGEON Magazine *already does this.* DRAGON *doesn't, but we've got a new chief here at Dragon HQ. Since he's the nosy type, I'm relatively sure he'll start tinkering with the website once he's changed everything in the magazine. No promises of course, but it'd be nice to do something like this with the maps from "Cities of the Ages."*

Planely Speaking . . .

It has been a long time since I've felt compelled to write to you, but issue #287, as well as the imminent release of the *Manual of the Planes*, changed that.

First, let me join the many in singing your praises. The new format looks really cool. I especially loved the "Cave of Contents"—it's quite possibly the first truly original thing I've seen in months. Also, your new artists are top-notch. I think that David Day has added a lot to the "Elminster's Guide" articles with his great illustrations. (Why not turn one of his works into a poster-sized drawing as a bonus one month?)

PREVIEWS DRAGON #89

Rivers of Blood
Can the adventurers defend a besieged village from invaders in 10th-Century Russia? Jump right in and explore the exciting world of Eastern Europe in the Dark Ages. This adventure is based on the Red Sails campaign setting in *DRAGON* #290. A D&D adventure for 4th-level PCs but adaptable for levels 1-7.

Rage
He'd be angry if he could, but all this barbarian hero can do is wonder where his rage went. The PCs must defeat a family of vile trolls to help a hero regain his will to fight. A D&D adventure for 7th-level PCs but adaptable for levels 5-9.

Honor and Eta
The PCs must race to find the "spirit creature" tormenting a village of eta and stop its cannibalistic ways. Even those of unclean spirit deserve to be able to perform an execution in peace. A D&D *Oriental Adventures* adventure for 1st-level PCs but adaptable for levels 2-8.

Headless
Hundreds of souls are at stake as heads continue to roll. The entire region of Sterich is at risk as a diabolical servant of a dark, ancient power struggles to gain a foothold in the Crystalmist Mountains. A D&D adventure for 12th-level PCs but adaptable for levels 9-15.

Wedding Bells
Missing citizens isn't on the agenda at a wedding service in the quiet town of Dockalong. If the PCs don't discover what sort of creature is kidnapping the town's citizens, more are sure to perish. A D&D adventure for 4th-level PCs but adaptable for levels 1-12.

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PRO EQUALITY!

I've been playing D&D in one incarnation or another for about 12 years. I must say: The new edition of D&D is definitely the best iteration of the rules I've had the pleasure of playing. However, I do have one issue with the new edition regarding ability scores.

To quote from page 24 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide:* "Here's an important secret: Not all of the ability scores are equal." This section then goes on to talk about how much more importance Strength has over Charisma.

Personally, I find serious fault with this way of thinking. Certainly, having a +4 modifier to attack and damage rolls is going to have much greater importance than a +4 modifier from Charisma during a combat scenario. However, a character with low Charisma is going to suffer in social situations. He will find that people don't trust him easily, and he won't make friends or allies as quickly as someone with high Charisma. He also won't be able to serve as the voice of the party as effectively as someone with high Charisma, an ability that can come in very handy!

It's fine to say that Strength is more important than Charisma if you are running a campaign that is heavy in combat, such as the infamous hack-n-slash adventures. Conversely, a game that relies heavily on intrigue and politics, that is rich in roleplay and low in combat, will give more importance to Charisma or Intelligence.

However, for those of us that try to run a balanced game—one with action, intrigue, social interaction, and character development—no one ability score can be more important than another.

Jon Mullenax • Fairborn, OH

pissed off?

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formats, I often find myself disappointed because they don't meet my personal vision of how it should be done.

However, I should have had more faith in you because, once again, *Dragon* came through with flying colors. You gave enough information for those who haven't read the books to understand the setting without getting bogged down in details, and your interpretation of the characters was wonderful. I could go on effusively like this for some time, but I'll spare you.

I only noticed two minor errors. First, Flick Ohmsford was not a half-elf. His adopted brother Shea was, but Flick was not. The second error is also a racial mistake: Wren was not human. The human blood had almost entirely been weeded out of her line through intermarriage with elves. She was elven enough to be made their queen, so I would have thought she would be elven enough to be stated as such in your article.

But again, these two small things in no way diminished my enjoyment of your conversion of these wonderful books. You went beyond my expectations, and as I said, I'm not easy to please. Thank you, and please tell me there are more book conversions on the way!

Avery Lathem • Wuerzburg, Germany

Say it Ain't So!

I'm writing to comment on the disgusting Shannara adaptation that featured in your recent issue (#286). Some of the article was okay, but most of it was just painfully bad.

The character descriptions are terrible. It seems as though the authors didn't want to be bothered by little things like creativity and so simply shoe-horned the characters into D&D terms that were totally inappropriate. What's worse is that more often than not the character backgrounds have information in them that must have been written by someone who had never even read the book the character was derived from!

The slavish devotion to D&D and the D20 system ruined what could have been a decent adaptation.

The Elder Druid Prestige class is so bad that every copy of this issue ought to be recalled so that they can have the word "crap" spray painted in bright pink over the entire article. Heck, I'm not even going to get into the creatures and artifacts sections. They're not as bad as the Elder Druid, but while you've got the spray paint out . . .

Finally, I'm sure that the artists who collaborated on this issue are all fine people who do excellent work, but darn it! Terry Brooks has always had illustrations of his main characters and locations. Nothing shown in the various Shannara-related articles even vaguely resembles the images he had in his books. Now, I understand that there are always licensing issues and that you must deal with getting permission and such, but the illustrators shouldn't have done illustrations for things that were already depicted (and depicted better, I might add) elsewhere.

I think this whole issue should have been run in April, that way *Dragon* could claim it was all a bad joke.

Robert Tafoya • Address withheld

The [article] is so bad that every copy of the magazine ought to be recalled so that they can have the word "crap" spray painted in bright pink over the entire article.

Every time Dragon *tackles a setting as beloved as Terry Brooks's world of Shannara, there will be fans who disagree with our interpretation. Still, we learned a lot from readers' comments on the Shannara issue and think that next year's big campaign setting will be worlds better.* Just keep that spray paint away from the magazine!

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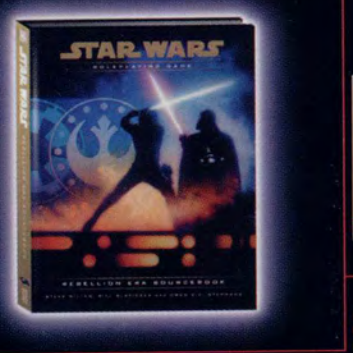

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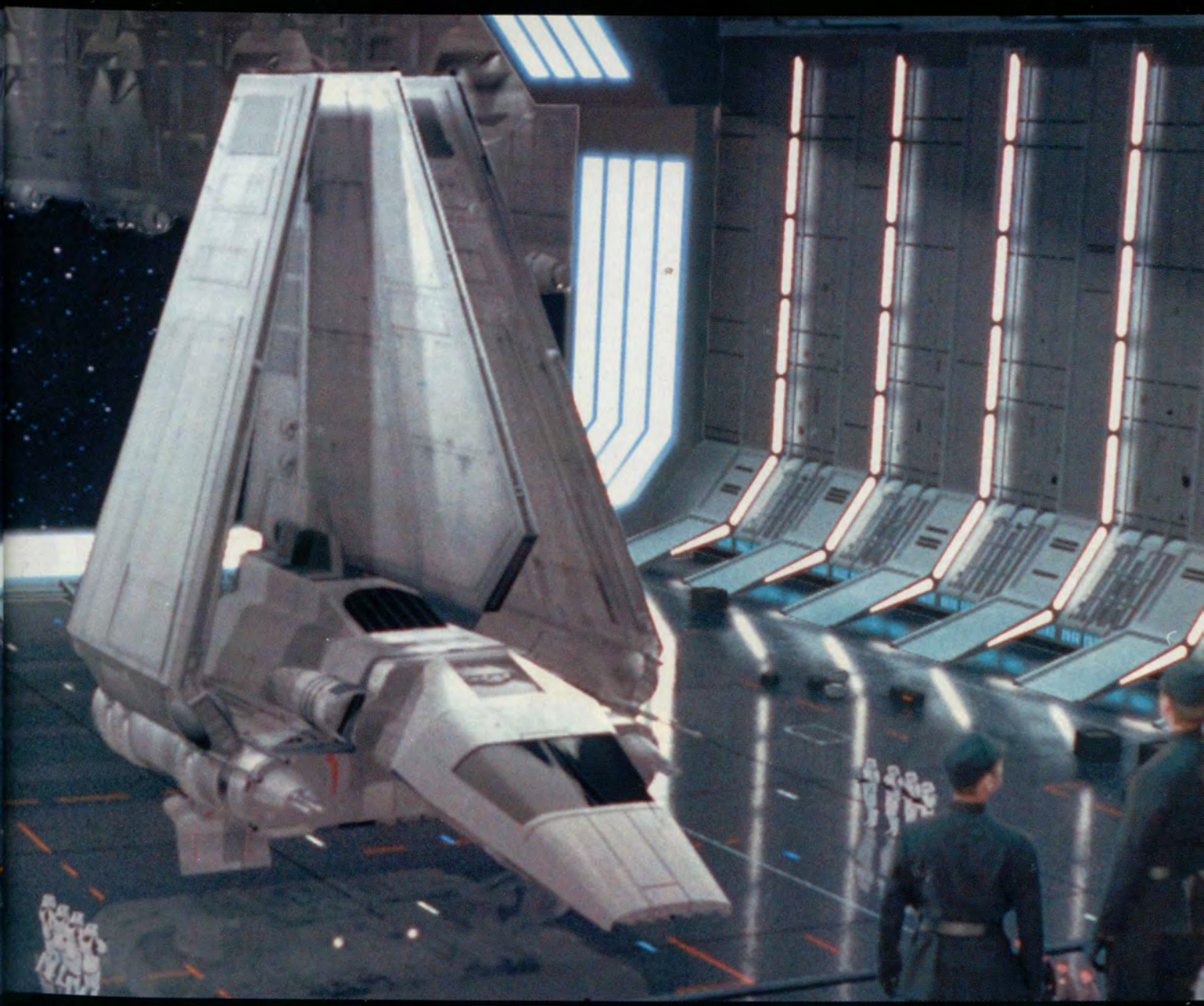

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Nov 16-18 R	**U-CON** Michigan University of Michigan, Ann Arbor Contact: U-Con •P.O. Box 4491, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-4491 uconoinfo@umich.edu • www.deathstar.org/~ucon Featuring: RPGA Living Events, RPGs, CCGs, miniature and board games, and more.

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Dec 1 R	**DRAGONMEET 2001** England Kensington Town Hall, London Contact: Gameforce Ltd. • 18-20 Bromell's Road • London, England SW4 0BG info@dragonmeet.com • www.dragonmeet.com
Dec 7-9 R	**KEOISH WINTER GAMES/WIK CON 2001** New York SUNY Geneseo Student Union, Geneseo • klaxon2001@hotmail.com www.frontiernet.net/~rammusic/index.shtml

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ALL I NEED TO KNOW I LEARNED FROM D&D
LESSON #3: HOW TO TRAIN A BLACK PUDDING

IF YOU CAN'T STAND THE HEAT . . .

Several people ran D&D campaigns in which my many PCs took part, but for several years in the early days, most of my adventuring was done under the aegis of DM Rob Kuntz. Back in those very first years, beginning late in 1972 and stretching through 1975, there were only two types of adventuring: random outdoor exploration and set-piece encounters within a dungeon. While both sorts were fun, delving into the dark depths of subterranean mazes provided the most action-packed entertainment. There was no question about it; the vast majority of play was enjoying the thrill of dungeon crawling.

It was in a dungeon designed by Rob Kuntz that Mordenkainen encountered and charmed the magic-user Bigby, and subsequently enlisted that worthy as an apprentice. However, as his new apprentice was only 3rd level, in his more perilous ventures, Mordenkainen was accompanied by his trusty elven fighter/magic-user henchmen, Vram and Vin. These two were then of 4th/3rd level, armed with bows, swords, and minor spells. Their combat abilities facilitated expeditions to the lower dungeons. As was usual back then, Mordenkainen was systematically exploring each dungeon level, clearing it of creatures, heading ever deeper as things progressed.

To get below the sixth level, however, was difficult, if not impossible. The central chamber with the sole stairway down was the lair of a huge and hungry black pudding. After the initial discovery of—and hasty escape from—this monster, Mordenkainen made a point of using various means to try to avoid the thing. Stealth was useless, outdistancing it in a footrace was not possible because of its position, and even a few shots from a *wand of fireballs* failed to discourage the creature. This did not serve Mordenkainen's aims at all, and the black pudding continued to block further exploration.

So with Vram and Vin, armed with a *wand of paralysis* and a *wand of fear* respectively, Mordenkainen sallied forth and quickly descended to the sixth level. Upon entering the monster's lair, all three characters plied their wands. For once, the black pudding failed its saves. Thoroughly singed and filled with magically induced terror, yet quite unable to move away, the creature sat quivering in its central "nest." The three adventurers came near to the black pudding, poked and prodded but did not kill the monster. After a successful foray into the 7th level, Mordenkainen lead the ascent back to the black pudding's lair most cautiously. All three wands were at the ready. Ah-hah! Nothing but an empty chamber! Of course, the creature had by then recovered from its paralysis and crawled off to heal its wounds. So the three adventurers passed onward, unmolested, and in a short time were in the sunlight of the upper world once again.

Soon thereafter, Mordenkainen took Bigby in tow and again ventured into the dungeons. The pair sent a *fireball* into the notorious pudding-guarded chamber, but heard nothing. Following quickly, the two saw a black pudding moving at its best speed away from them, leaving the access to the lower regions of the dungeon open and uncontested. Everything had worked as planned. The black pudding had learned fear. It was now conditioned to flee whenever a *fireball* exploded near it.

From then on, Mordenkainen and his cohorts needed only to send a *fireball* forth before entering, and their access to the lower levels was free and clear. Other dungeon delvers, not knowing this secret, were not so enabled. The black pudding was active in its aggression, hoping for some tasty human flesh to augment its diet of rats and other subterranean vermin. The easy access brought plenty of rewards to the bold, and made it difficult for competing adventurers to gain entrance to the deeper areas. The mage and his apprentice entered the chamber so frequently that in time the mere appearance of Mordenkainen, sans a fiery burst, was sufficient to send the black pudding sliding off at its fastest pace. The monster became a sort of mascot and guardian. Perhaps it haunts the chamber to this day. . . .

The moral to the story, if there is one, is that even dumb monsters might be trained with a mix of skill and luck. Because Rob was a very able DM, he allowed such conditioning to take effect. I like to think it was clever play that brought this about, not merely a Dungeon Master's fondness for his monsters. . . .

In next month's column I'll relate the marvels of a dungeon dweller in Greyhawk Castle, a thing much sought after, always escaping.

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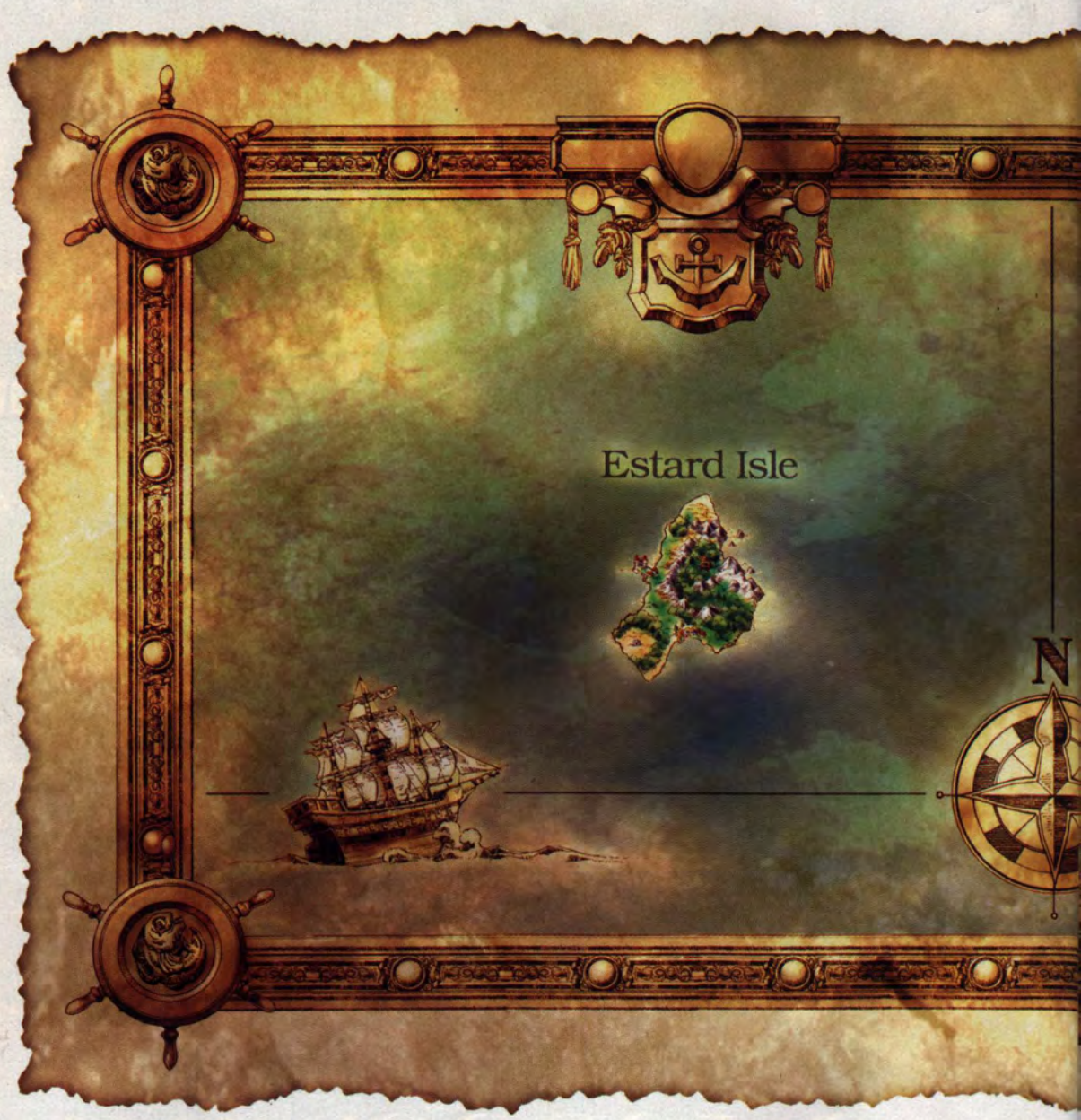

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CARLO ARELLANO

Black-clad assassins, masters of stealth and deception, martial artists of extraordinary skill—all of these come to mind when envisioning the ninja.

Ninja are a part of our pop culture, and they are often portrayed in highly dramatic and often unrealistic ways. But the mystique of the ninja is more than mere legend; it is a tradition with roots that stretch back for centuries and continue to this day.

Origins of the Ninja

Most people relate to the ninja through the Hollywood stereotype, but the ninja's roots are much more humble. In fact, the first ninja didn't even go by their familiar name.

Most historians agree that the ninja evolved from refugees of the T'ang dynasty in China by 500-700 A.D. These refugees were soldiers, monks, and mystics who sought a new life where they could practice their spirituality in isolation. They settled in the forested mountains of southern and central Japan and practised their mysterious arts outside samurai-dominated society, which frowned greatly on any departure from the stringent class system it enforced. The arts of these refugees, which commingled among themselves and the indigenous families of the region, became a practice known as shugendo or "way of supernatural power." Shugendo taught that by knowing oneself in relation to the five elements of the universe—air, fire, wood, metal, and earth—one would be complete. Its adherents were dubbed yamahoshi (later yamabushi) or "mountain warriors."

By 700 A.D. many warriors had come to train with these "wise men," who had proven their skill against the incursions of the Shogunate samurai. These first warriors had come to integrate the teachings of shugendo with its rigorous physical and spiritual training regimen. The practice of shugendo sharpened their awareness and honed their focus to a fine edge. They learned new and unorthodox weaponry like the chain, axe, and halberd. Shugendo also brought them a spiritual center from which all their other skills flowed; they believed that knowing the intrinsic nature of the five elements within enabled them to conquer without. It could be argued that these men were the first ninja.

These early ninja returned to their homes during the relatively peaceful Heian period of Japan (794-1156 A.D.). They passed on their knowledge within family-run schools called "ryu." It was here that the techniques of the yamabushi achieved greater refinement. Some of these ryu became the foundation from which the principles of shugendo continued to flourish.

One of the core techniques was called yamabushi heiho, or "mountain-warrior warfare." Radically different from the samurai form of open-field combat, yamabushi heiho stressed guerilla warfare, hit-and-run tactics, and stealth over strength. Its success was proven over decades against the sporadic incursions of samurai into yamabushi territory. As the yamabushi's numbers dwindled due to attrition, there arose among the warriors of the Iga and Koga provinces those who would eclipse their yamabushi ancestors in skill, ability, and renown: the ninja.

The First Ninja Clans

By the Kamakura era (1185-1333 A.D.), the oppressive and corrupt Shogunate had provoked many of the lower classes in isolated areas of Japan to rebel. In the southern Iga and Koga provinces, several families made rebellion against the conformity of the Shogunate a deadly art.

The first ninja clans were born and flourished, with as many as 25 different ryu in full operation. Many of the clans specialized in certain skills such as the fast-drawing of their blades (iaijutsu) or spear-fighting (yarijutsu), but all of the families practiced similar core techniques and philosophies. As much spiritual as martial, the ninja and their art, ninjutsu (loosely translated as "the way of stealth"), became necessary tools in the volatile political world of Japan.

Among their many activities, the ninja protected their territory and sometimes worked with certain elements of the Shogunate. Espionage and assassination were valued tools to offset potentially greater conflicts. Some

The History of the Ninja

BLACK-CLAD ASSASSINS

by Dean Poisso • illustrations by Carlo Arellano and Jeremy Jarvis

of the more powerful feudal clans feared the ninja—and rightly so, for the ninja were on the rise and their reputations were well deserved. Stories of their incredible exploits had begun to circulate. Some were exaggerated and others were simply unbelievable, but all fed the growing mystique of the ninja.

Building the Mystique

By 1467 A.D., the Onin war had ignited an era of conflict. The Shogunate was in question. With no clear ruler, Japan disintegrated into war.

While becoming extraordinarily refined in precision and skill, the ninja proliferated throughout the Iga and Koga provinces. Some attested to as many as 50 or more ninja clans in Koga alone! Practices within the two provinces were similar; with such a high concentration of ninja clans in the area, cross-pollination of techniques was inevitable. The many Koga clans often worked in concert with their Iga cousins, committing everything from sabotage to espionage.

The reputation of the ninja became synonymous with the court intrigues among the daimyos (feudal lords) of Japan. So brazen were the ninja that entire clans began selling their skills to the highest bidder, wreaking havoc on their patrons' enemies, although some ninja clans frowned upon this practice. This mercenary attitude was so grotesque an affront to samurai ideals of war (conflicts should be fought in the open), that the dominant warrior class reviled the ninja as a whole.

Key Players in History

By 1570 the Shogunate was near final collapse, and the great General Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) made his bid for absolute power. After destroying the last remnant of the Ashikaga clan that controlled the Shogunate, Nobunaga sought to solidify his hold by gaining control of the Iga province from rival daimyo Kitabatake Tomonori. Oda moved his army into the region and forced Kitabatake to take Nobunaga's son, Nobuo, as his heir. A mere two years later, Nobunaga had Kitabatake assassinated, leaving Nobuo in control. The Iga ninja immediately plotted revenge, sabotaging the young daimyo's great castle and burning it to the ground.

The ensuing battle pitted Nobuo and his 12,000 samurai against an army of guerilla assassins in their home territory. All 12,000 samurai perished in the numerous strategic traps laid by the ninja of Iga, although Nobuo himself escaped. The ninja numbered no more than 3,000.

In anger at the dishonor of his son's defeat and fearful of the ninja whose defiance had triggered this catastrophe, Nobunaga spent two years preparing an army. He personally led 45,000 samurai against the rebellious ninja. Outnumbered ten to one and completely surrounded, the Iga ninja nonetheless made an enormous impact with their guerilla tactics. By day they disappeared, allowing Nobunaga a few easy victories. By night, however, they made their full impact known, raiding encampments and killing by stealth. Two of Nobunaga's best generals lost their heads during the night. So many samurai died during these raids that most stopped sleeping altogether for fear of never waking again.

Nobunaga was left with no choice. He razed the entire province, slaying innocents, soldiers, and farmers alike, and even burning the ground itself to leave nothing for the ninja. In the final battle upon the slopes of Mt. Hijiyama, Nobunaga set fire to the entire mountain and slew all trying to escape.

Of the 45,000 troops that Nobunaga had marched in with, he left with less than 30,000. The Iga ninja numbered only 4,000.

Even so, the ninja of Iga were scattered to the winds, taking their deadly skills with them. Soon after the Battle of Iga, Nobunaga was assassinated by one of his own advisors. Legendary ninja Hattori Hanzo helped daimyo Tokugawa Ieyasu unite Japan under one rule. But from this point on, even though the ninja still existed in small pockets, the era of the ninja was slowly on the decline.

"Thought, Word, Deed"

They say a ninja is nothing more than a person who has been immersed in ninjutsu. Ninjutsu is more than a martial art. It is a complex system that stresses the

CARLO ARELLANO

necessity of taking advantage of every single factor that leads to victory. In practice, this allows the ninja to execute acts of extreme danger and potential ruthlessness without hesitation or strained conviction. The ninja operated within the gray boundaries between the moral compass points of good and evil by necessity. They survived by using the skills passed down to them—skills honed to razor precision.

Ninjutsu fostered perseverance and focus under all circumstances, and since it was rooted in the early practice of shugendo, it stressed flexibility, self-mastery, and attunement with the ebb and flow of nature. These spiritual practices helped to cultivate the incredible focus for which the ninja were renowned. This philosophy took a practical form on the battlefield, summed up by the concept of seishin ("purity of heart," or "completeness"). When a ninja had achieved seishin, he was ready to persevere through any ordeal knowing that his own inner focus was pure of intent. The ninja credo is "Thought, Word, Deed;" all endeavors must begin and be completed in this order to be fully realized.

The Way of Nature

As they progressed in skill and refinement, the ninjas' philosophy permeated every aspect of their training. As children they were trained to develop their balance and agility. As adolescents they began training in junan taiso, a rigorous regimen that promotes incredible levels of natural flexibility. To act in the way nature acts is the ultimate physical expression of ninjutsu.

Not just a physical training regimen, junan taiso also incorporates the knowledge of the five elements—air, fire, wood, metal, and earth—as symbolic postures in which to conduct oneself, especially in combat. To take the posture of water, the ninja flows with his opponent, thereby allowing the opponent to waste his energies upon the ninja. To take the posture of metal, he drives aggressively into his opponent, forceful and unyielding. These concepts are manifest in the ninja hand positions called kuji-kiri, which the ninja use as a means of focusing themselves.

These changing natural postures and their single-minded focus are what made the ninja the multi-dimensional warriors they were, in stark contrast to the stolid style of the samurai. To the oppressive samurai of feudal Japan, the ninja represented an entirely different standard of individual, antithetical to the samurai ideal.

The culmination of ninjutsu training evolved to include over 18 other separate arts. Taijutsu (unarmed combat), yarijutstu (spear combat), koppojutsu ("the art of shattering bones"), and meditation were among the many techniques the ninja learned in their incredibly rigorous training. Each ninja ryu typically maintained a similar core set of arts, but very often they excelled at one art in particular. Only after mastering each of these arts was a ninja ready to serve his clan as a shadow warrior.

The Four Ninja Types

The clans of feudal Japan were extended families of the same ancestors whose surnames brought some level of prestige. The ninja clans were no different, perhaps lacking the sheer size of the larger samurai families. At the head of each family or clan was a daimyo or lord, and all who bore the family name answered to him (or rarely, her) without question. There is no higher loyalty to a ninja than his clan. Clan secrets, especially concerning ninjutsu, were never discussed with outsiders. The way of life during the feudal era required the utmost secrecy. Death awaited any who broke this inflexible rule.

Contrary to common belief, ninjas are not all black-clad assassins. Within the clan structure there are four different types of ninja.

Leading the ninja were the jonin. The jonin were the most experienced and respected ninja within their clan. They set the rules of conduct and engagement for all the ninja within the family. To the clan at large, the jonin were the heart and soul of the family. The jonin made all the important decisions for the clan, and it was the jonin who steered the course of the clan and its traditions through the violent political waters of feudal Japan. The jonin were usually the only ones who could see the whole political landscape. They were without exception very skilled in their own right, as their position demanded it.

When a jonin had need of his clan's members, he often turned to the next ranking members of the clan, the chunin. The chunin were ninja with

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NINJA CONCEPTS

Below are some character concepts for the ninja:

CLANLESS NINJA
Your clan has been destroyed and you seek revenge on those responsible.

NINJA AGENT
You are an agent of the Shogunate or your clan sent to spy on possible enemies. You keep your identity secret, although the other PCs might be potential allies on your mission.

GENIN ASSASSIN
You are on a long-term mission to destroy an enemy of your clan.

CHUNIN SCOUT
Sent to find potential recruits, you have your eyes on the PCs (or maybe a single member of the party).

KUNOICHI SPY
You are a kunoichi in the depths of some deep political intrigue (perhaps as an ambassador) and you need the other PCs to help you succeed or escape.

GENIN/CHUNIN/ KUNOICHI BODYGUARD
You've been charged to guard a person (perhaps one of the PCs) or a particular item with your life.

uncanny skills in maintaining the facade of numerous identities. They maintained the clan training camps where the ninja foot soldiers dwelt, and they acted on behalf of the jonin whenever necessary and with whomever necessary. The chunin were remarkably adept at moving through all levels of Japan's rigid class-based society in order to facilitate business for the clan. This made them incredibly important to the clan; it also made them extremely dangerous.

The ninja most people are familiar with are the often black-clad genin. The genin were the soldiers of the clan. They were trained from birth, raised in isolated mountain villages, and ingrained with the concepts of ninjutsu and clan tradition to the exclusion of all else. This made the genin fearsome opponents. The single-minded focus and training of ninjutsu made flesh, the genin personified the mystique of the ninja.

The genin might have inhabited the lowest rung of the clan's hierarchy, yet they embodied the jonin's will. Their importance cannot be overstated. The genin were the ones who executed reconnaissance across enemy fiefs, assassinated key individuals to start or stop major conflicts, acted as clan messengers for their leaders through enemy-held lands, and performed much of the espionage for the Shogunate in the later years of the feudal era. The genin were, in truth, the heart of what it was to be ninja.

Finally, there was the kunoichi, the female ninja. Female ninja were among the most successful types of ninja. They were trained as all the ninja were trained, with an added emphasis on psychological warfare and intelligence gathering and transmission. Because they were women, the kunoichi could go places no other ninja could dream of going. They often spelled the difference between the destruction or longevity of a ninja clan. As such, they were highly prized. At least one jonin from the Iga ninja was a former kunoichi.

The Adventuring Ninja

On the surface, it might appear that playing a ninja is a lot of work, and it is!

The ninja should not be confused with the rogue, although the two share similar skill sets. Ideally, the ninja should be a loyal member of a large organization (not unlike rogues), with fealty driven by personal honor. Commitment means everything to the ninja. But those with a more independent outlook can certainly play clanless ninja.

DMing the Ninja

Like any other character type, the ninja can be a superb storytelling tool when

SELECTING NINJA SKILLS AND FEATS

When building ninja characters, remember that ninjutsu is not a single skill. It is a system that incorporates many skills, some of which are martial arts unto themselves. For example, the Iga and Koga traditions included 18 separate basic skills. These skills, coupled with the ancient shugendo mysticism, are what make a ninja.

SEISHIN (spiritual refinement): Knowledge (religion)

TENMON (weather sensing): Knowledge (nature), Wilderness Lore

YARIJUTSU (fight with spear): Martial Weapon Proficiency (long spear), Weapon Focus (long spear), Weapon Specialization (long spear)

BAJUTSU (horsemanship): Ride, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Trample, Spirited Charge

SHURIKENJUTSU (art of throwing shuriken): Throw Anything**, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (shuriken), Weapon Focus (shuriken), Weapon Specialization (shuriken)

KUSARIGAMA (fight with chain weapons): Exotic Weapon Proficiency (chain or spiked chain), Weapon Focus (chain or spiked chain), Weapon Specialization (chain or spiked chain)

HENSOJUTSU (art of disguise and impersonation): Bluff, Disguise

SHINOBI IRI (stealth and methods of infiltration): Hide, Move Silently, Streetwise*, Knowledge (politics)**

BOJUTSU (fight with staff): Weapon Focus (staff), Weapon Specialization (staff)

NAGINATAJUTSU (fight with halberd): Martial Weapon Proficiency (halberd), Weapon Focus (halberd), Weapon Specialization (halberd)

B-RYAKU (war and mission strategy): Knowledge (war and tactics)'

CHO HO (intelligence gathering and espionage): Diplomacy, Gather Information, Streetwise*

INTONJUTSU (art of escape and concealment): Escape Artist, Hide

NINJA KEN (fight with sword): Exotic Weapon Proficiency (ninja-to), Weapon Focus (ninja-to), Weapon Specialization (ninja-to)

KAYAKUJUTSU (using explosives and fire): Alchemy

TAIJUTSU (art of unarmed combat): Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike), Fists of Iron†**, Improved Grapple†, Stunning Fist†, Unbalancing Strike†, Pain Touch†**

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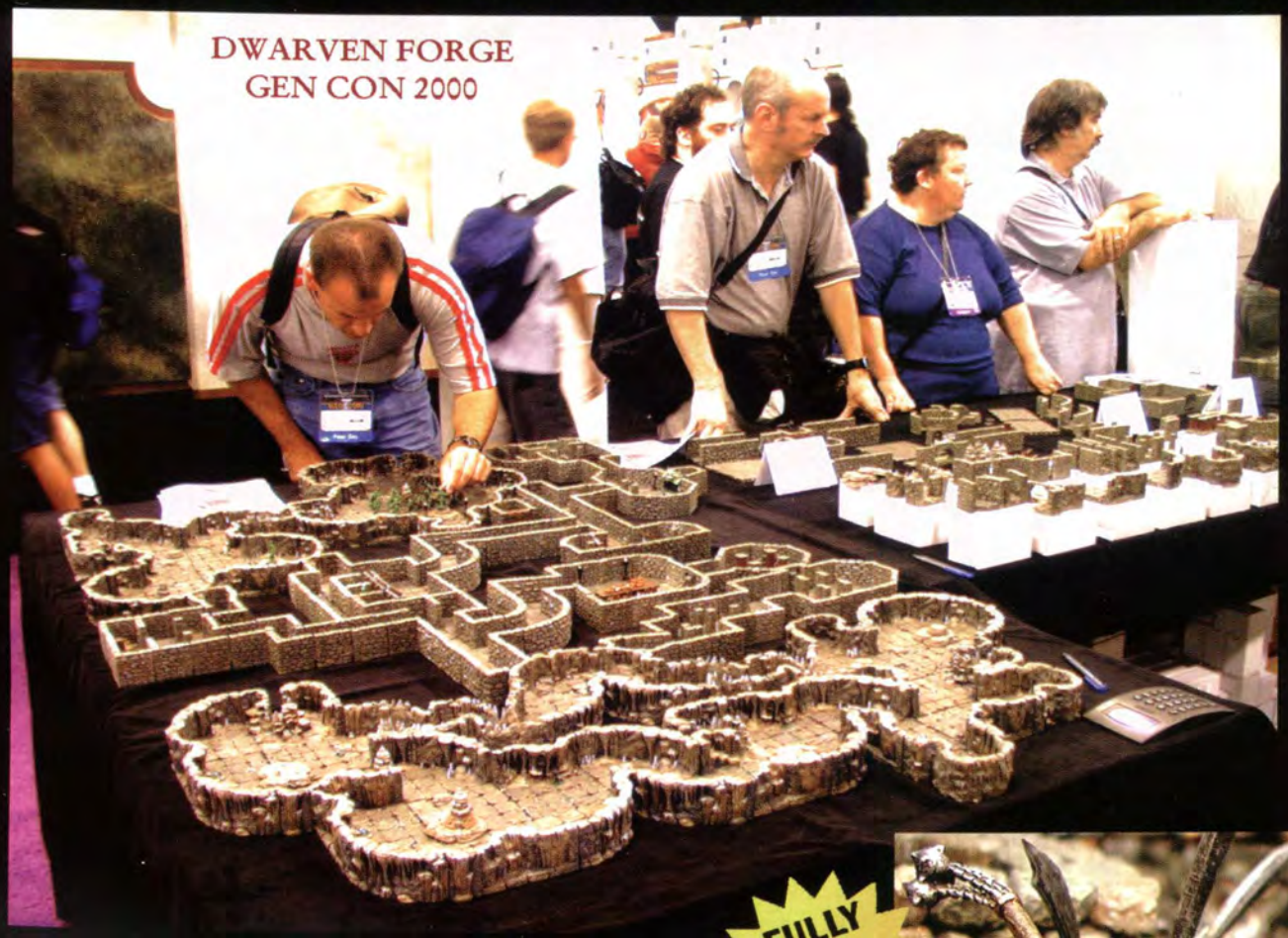

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NINJA WEAPONS

All of the following are weapons commonly used by the ninja:

From the *Player's Handbook*
- DAGGER
- HALBERD
- LONGSPEAR
- QUARTERSTAFF
- SHORTBOW
- SHURIKEN

From *Oriental Adventures*
- BLOWGUN
- CHAIN
- FUKIMI-BARI
- KAWANAGA
- KUSARI-GAMA
- NINJA-TO
- SHIKOMI-ZUE
- SPIKED CHAIN

used correctly. The key is giving the ninja the background and support structure that allows them to act true to their character.

Ninja do not exist in a vacuum and rarely work alone. They almost always answer to a higher authority whose motives transcend the power level of most, if not all, PCs in the campaign. Typically, this higher authority is a ninja clan, but if the PC is a rare lone ninja, she could be a local daimyo.

The lone ninja is either highly skilled or a specialized character. Be sure to integrate these characters with the group—perhaps there's an alliance between the ninja's clan and the PCs' families, or perhaps the PCs are all ninja.

Ninja NPCs should be dynamic. If they are foes of the party, have them employ unpredictable tactics. Ninja are masters of subterfuge, so they should make fearsome enemies.

If your NPC ninja are allies, keep in mind that an NPC ninja will probably keep his identity secret unless he's traveling with other ninja. This doesn't mean he won't be effective at achieving his mission, just that he'll be subtle and utilize his skills behind the scenes without the PCs' awareness.

Playing a Ninja

Ninja are not simply assassins or thieves. The ninja is a person with grave responsibilities. She is someone who usually belongs to a family, clan, or cause and remains true to that loyalty to the bitter end. In a word, ninja are people of intent. Ninja employ subterfuge and guile cloaked within a multitude of techniques, but always with the intent of accomplishing their goal, first and foremost.

As a ninja, everything you do should have a purpose. This does not mean that everything you do must be known. It means that when being pursued, you should distract your pursuers from the intent of your mission. It also means that when pursuing an adversary, you should distract that adversary into presenting the most advantageous target for you to strike. Ninja are extremely patient, after all.

Above all, remember: Ninja have a sense of honor. They are not mindless killers. For instance, it is a mark of distinction among the best ninja assassins to kill no one but the intended target. Slip in, meet your goal, and slip out. Leave the chaos and carnage to less refined people.

How you interact with the world outside of your life as a ninja is extremely important. You can have cordial relations with others not of the clan, but you should not reveal yourself as a ninja unless someone has proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that he is truly trustworthy—and even then only under extreme circumstances.

If another PC or NPC discovers your identity as a ninja, all is not lost. You don't necessarily have to kill the person just because he learned who you are. Instead, it should provide you a great opportunity for roleplaying with the other PCs. You might also be able to convince the suspecting parties that you are not a ninja but a mere thief.

The preservation of your ninja identity is something that is very personal. Let your conscience and alignment dictate the proper course, but don't ever forget that you're a ninja and not a common killer. Killing, with your great array of skills, should always be a last resort.

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Three New Ninja Classes
SILENT WARRIORS

BY MATTHEW SERNETT · ILLUSTRATED BY JEFF LAUBENSTEIN

"Be extremely subtle, even to the point of formlessness. Be extremely mysterious, even to the point of soundlessness. Thereby you can be the director of your opponent's fate."
-Sun Tzu, The Art of War

Ninja, it's a word imbued with the power of myth and mysticism. Regardless of the ninjas' historical roots, they now occupy an unassailable position in our cultural psyche. Masters of martial arts, magic, stealth, speed, acrobatics, disguise, poisons, and other death-dealing arts, the mystical ninja offer a wealth of opportunities for prestige classes.

The prestige classes presented below share a mutual world history that can be incorporated into any *Oriental Adventures* campaign. Setting the histories of the prestige classes aside, each could easily be inserted into any D&D game. DMs using the Rokugan setting presented in the *Oriental Adventures* book should note that the Scorpion, Snake, and Spider clans mentioned in the poison fist's description are not meant to represent any of the samurai clans from Rokugan.

POISON FIST

"A dart, a dagger, a bowl of rice; there are many devices used to deliver poison, but none is so deadly and insidious as the empty hand."

Once an empire lay on the brink of disaster. The emperor died and left his teenage son in control. Scheming eunuchs controlled the child-king, and this did not pass the notice of the samurai clans. Three clans in particular were offended by the young emperor's ascendance to the throne. The Snake, Scorpion, and Spider clans conferred with one another about the young emperor and decided that one of their clans should rule, although they could not agree which one. Through diplomacy and bullying they gathered nine other samurai clans to their cause, and they sought to dethrone the emperor and take the empire for themselves. Unfortunately, the emperor proved to be more intelligent and willful than the clans anticipated. In battle after battle, the young lord's strategic genius overcame the rebellious clans' superior numbers. Soon it became clear that the twelve clans would lose the war and that the eunuchs would rule the empire through their strategically brilliant puppet emperor.

Some of the rebellious clans were wiped out during the war. Others surrendered to the emperor or were captured and executed to a man. The Snake, Scorpion, and Spider clans were determined not to succumb to such a fate. As one they fled the empire, leaving the rebellion without leadership and allowing the eunuchs to take control.

The coup was a complete failure. The other clans blamed the Snake, Scorpion, and Spider clans for abandoning them to defeat, while the emperor and his eunuchs held those clans to be the instigators of the war. Forced into exile, the three clans banded together to survive and set up a base of operations in a long-forgotten ruined fortress. From there they plotted their revenge. They remain there to this day, waiting and scheming for the chance to assume the throne and their place in the sun.

The Poison Fist ninja clan was formed from the remaining Snake, Scorpion, and Spider clans. Although formally unified, members of the Poison Fist clan still hold the highest allegiance to their own clan, and though they work toward the same goal, competition and conflict among the three clans is commonplace.

The Poison Fist clan has abandoned the concepts of honor and the code of the bushido. Vengeance against the empire and the samurai clans is their ultimate goal. Their numbers are too small for a martial victory, so the lead-

ers of the Poison Fist clan hope to bring down the empire from within. Thus, ninja of the Poison Fist clan act as thieves, spies, and assassins for hire, rarely revealing their true loyalties.

Rogues, rangers, and monks most commonly become poison fists. Samurai, sohai, fighters, and spellcasters often multiclass as poison fists to gain prestige within the Poison Fist clan as masters of the prestige class are accorded more respect and honor than members of other classes. NPC poison fists are elite spies, thieves, and assassins for the three clans and carry out many missions on the Poison Fist clan's behalf.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Characters who take a level of poison fist gain no new proficiency in the use of armor or weapons.

Poison Use (Ex): The poison fist is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning herself when applying poison to a blade.

Totem Form (Sp): At 1st level, a poison fist can use *polymorph self* as a spell-like ability to transform into her totem creature (snake, scorpion, or spider). Unlike the standard use of the *polymorph self* spell, the poison fist can only adopt the form of her totem creature and is limited to Tiny size. With the initial change, the poison fist regains hit points as though she had rested for a day (this does not provide any of the other benefits of resting for a day, and subsequent changes during the same use of the *totem form* ability do not heal the poison fist further). During the duration of the *totem form* ability, the poison fist can change into her totem creature and back again as a free action as many times as she likes. *Totem form* has a duration equal to 10 rounds plus the poison fist's class level. It can be used a number of times per day as determined by level (see the Poison Fist advancement table).

The totem creatures for each poison fist clan are as follows:

Clan	Creature
Snake	Tiny viper
Scorpion	Tiny monstrous scorpion
Spider	Tiny monstrous spider

Sneak Attack (Ex): A 2nd-level poison fist can make sneak attacks. Any time the poison fist's target would be denied his Dexterity bonus to AC (whether he actually has a Dexterity bonus or not) or when the poison fist flanks the target, the poison fist's attack deals +1d6 points of damage. This extra damage increases to +2d6 at 5th level and again to +3d6 at 8th level. Should the poison fist score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks only count as sneak attacks within 30 feet.

With a sap (blackjack) or unarmed strike, a poison fist can make a sneak attack that deals subdual damage instead of normal damage. A poison

POISON FIST

HIT DIE: D6

Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+2	+2	+2	Poison use, *totem form* 1/day
2	+1	+3	+3	+3	Sneak attack +1d6
3	+2	+3	+3	+3	Acrobatics (+10), *totem form* 2/day
4	+3	+4	+4	+4	Venomous blow 1/day, +1 natural armor bonus
5	+3	+4	+4	+4	Sneak attack +2d6, *totem form* 3/day
6	+4	+5	+5	+5	*Totem aspect*, venomous blow 2/day
7	+5	+5	+5	+5	Poison immunity, acrobatics (+20), *totem form* 4/day
8	+6	+6	+6	+6	Sneak attack +3d6, venomous blow 3/day
9	+6	+6	+6	+6	+2 natural armor bonus, *totem form* 5/day
10	+7	+7	+7	+7	Improved venomous blow, Venomous blow 4/day

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a poison fist, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Alignment: Any non-good.

Base Attack Bonus: +3.

Hide: 8 ranks.

Intimidate: 5 ranks.

Move Silently: 8 ranks.

Feats: Dodge, Improved Unarmed Strike, Great Fortitude, Mobility, Stunning Fist or monk's stunning attack.

Special: In addition, she must choose one of the three poison fist clans: Snake, Scorpion, or Spider.

CLASS SKILLS

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

The poison fist's class skills are:

STR	Climb, Jump, Swim
DEX	Balance, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Hide, Open Lock, Move Silently, Tumble
CON	
INT	Craft, Forgery, Knowledge (local), Read Lips, Search
WIS	Innuendo, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot
CHA	Bluff, Disguise, Gather Information, Intimidate

fist cannot use a weapon that deals normal damage to deal subdual damage with a sneak attack.

A poison fist can only sneak attack a living creature with discernable anatomy—undead, constructs, oozes, plants, and incorporeal creatures lack vital areas to attack. The poison fist must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach a vital spot. The poison fist cannot sneak attack a creature with concealment or when striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond her reach.

Natural Armor Bonus (Ex): As the poison fist delves deeper into the mysteries of her clan's philosophy, her skin begins to take on the attributes of her clan's totem animal. A poison fist of the Snake clan becomes scaly, while the skin of a Scorpion or Spider clan member becomes hard and chitinous. At 4th level, the poison fist gains a natural armor bonus. This bonus increases at 9th level.

Acrobatics (Su): A 3rd-level poison fist gains a +10 competence bonus to Balance, Climb, Jump, and Tumble checks. At 7th level, this bonus increases to +20. In addition, a poison fist can always choose to take 10 on a Balance, Climb, Jump, or Tumble check, even when circumstances would normally prevent her from doing so.

Venomous Blow (Su): At 4th level and higher, a poison fist gains the power to imbue her unarmed sneak attacks with poison. Enabling this ability is a free action, but the poison fist must choose to use it before she has taken any other actions during the round. For the rest of that round, all her sneak attacks also do poison damage as determined by her poison fist clan allegiance (see below). If her attacks in that round fail, she has wasted that use of the ability. The victim of a venomous blow must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + the poison fist's class level + Charisma modifier) or suffer the initial damage of the poison. One minute later, the victim must succeed at a second saving throw (regardless of the result of the first) or suffer the secondary damage. This ability can be used a number of times per day as determined by level (see the Poison Fist advancement table).

Clan	Poison Damage (initial and secondary)
Snake	1d2 temporary Constitution
Scorpion	1d4 temporary Strength
Spider	1d4 temporary Strength

Totem Aspect (Sp): At 6th level, the poison fist gains a spell-like ability that grants an aspect of her totem creature. It is usable three times a day as though cast by a sorcerer of a level equal to the poison fist's character level. Use of this ability is a free action, but it can only be used once in any given round. Each poison fist clan has a different *totem aspect* ability as follows:

Clan	Totem Aspect Ability
Snake	*Cobra's breath**
Scorpion	*Ray of enfeeblement*
Spider	*Spider climb*

*See *Oriental Adventures*

Poison Immunity (Su): A poison fist of 7th level or higher is completely immune to poisons.

Improved Venomous Blow (Su): At 10th level, any unarmed attack made during the round that the venomous blow ability is being used can cause poison damage as per the venomous blow ability's description. The attack need not be a sneak attack.

Multiclass Note: Monk characters can freely multiclass with this class. Monks who have already taken levels in another class may again take monk levels after gaining a level of poison fist.

GHOST-FACED KILLER

"Beware the ghost-faced killers, Li Quan, for they have spirit-medium powers—like the Immortals. Their flesh and bones can dissolve into nothingness; they pass from this world but not into the next. They become like a dream. . . ."

From out of nothing the specter of death appears, an armored shadow with a brilliant blade held high. In a flash the katana falls, severing life from limb in a bloody arc. All around, screams of terror and shouts of fear erupt, as quaking hands draw blades to fight the masked murderer. His target dead, the ghost-faced killer walks calmly away as swords and fists pass harmlessly through his nearly transparent body.

Long ago, when the persecution of the twelve rebellious clans began, one

clan sought a way to take revenge. Through dark sorcery, the shugenja of the clan contacted spirits of the Underworld to beseech a way that their clan might survive the coming strife and take revenge on the emperor who sought to crush them. The shugenja struck a dark bargain, and the demon-spirits they had contacted provided the clan with a means to the bloody ends they desired. Donning terrifying masks to hide their identities, warriors of the clan crept into the imperial palace, and through the evil power of the pact they had made, passed invisibly and intangibly into the imperial household and murdered the entire imperial family, plunging the country into bloody civil war once again. No one ever discovered the clan's honorless actions, and to this day, no one knows what clan the ghost-faced killers came from.

Today ghost-faced killers act as assassins and spies for hire, a mercenary clan that hides behind a guise of open and honorable conduct. When on a mission, they wear ghostly white, porcelain demon masks to hide their identities and as a symbol of the pact their clan made with the demon-spirits. Through training and discipline, ghost-faced killers learn the deadliest and most terrifying ways to attack foes, and through their mystic connection with the Underworld, ghost-faced killers learn to turn invisible, walk through walls, and even to see with the eyes of the spirits themselves.

While some ghost-faced killers come from the samurai or sohei character classes, most begin their careers as rangers or rogues. Fighters are only slightly less common. Few monks, barbarians, or members of spellcasting classes choose to become ghost-faced killers, but they aren't unknown.

NPC ghost-faced killers are members of the Ghost-Faced Killer clan of ninjas. This clan disguises itself as a normal samurai clan, loyal to the empire but unworthy of notice. Most of the time a ghost-faced killer simply pursues his responsibilities to the clan and the emperor, but when called by money or the clan daimyo, the ghost-faced killer dons the mask that means death for his enemies.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Characters who take a level of ghost-faced killer gain proficiency in all simple and martial weapons, and with light armor. Note that armor check penalties apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket, and Tumble, and that carrying heavy gear imposes a penalty on

GHOST-FACED KILLER

HIT DIE: D8

Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	*Beyond sight* 1/day
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	Sneak attack +1d6
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Death attack, *beyond sight* 2/day
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Frightful attack
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Sneak attack +2d6, *beyond sight* 3/day
6	+6	+5	+2	+2	Beyond touch 1/day
7	+7	+5	+2	+2	*Beyond sight* 4/day, *spirit sword* 1/day
8	+8	+6	+3	+3	*Beyond touch* 2/day, ghost sight (ethereal), sneak attack +3d6
9	+9	+6	+3	+3	*Beyond sight* 5/day, *spirit sword* 2/day
10	+10	+7	+3	+3	*Beyond touch* 3/day, ghost sight (invisible)

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a ghost-faced killer, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Alignment: Any evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Hide: 6 ranks.

Concentration: 4 ranks.

Intimidate: 4 ranks.

Move Silently: 6 ranks.

Feats: Death Blow*, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quickdraw.

*The following feat, reprinted from *Sword & Fist*, is required to be a ghost-faced killer.

DEATH BLOW

You waste no time in dealing with downed foes.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +2, Improved Initiative.

Benefit: You can perform a coup de grace attack against a helpless defender as a standard action.

Normal: Performing a coup de grace is a full-round action.

CLASS SKILLS

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

The ghost-faced killer's class skills are:

STR	Climb, Jump, Swim
DEX	Hide, Open Lock, Move Silently, Tumble
CON	Concentration
INT	Search
WIS	Listen, Spot
CHA	Bluff, Iaijutsu Focus, Intimidate

Swim checks.

Beyond Sight (Sp): A ghost-faced killer of 1st level or higher can cast *invisibility* as a sorcerer of a level equal to the ghost-faced killer's class level. Using this spell-like ability is a move-equivalent action, and it functions only for the ghost-faced killer. The ghost-faced killer may use *beyond sight* a number of times per day as determined by his level (see the Ghost-Faced Killer advancement table).

Sneak Attack (Ex): At 2nd level and higher, the ghost-faced killer can make sneak attacks. Any time the ghost-faced killer's target would be denied her Dexterity bonus to AC (whether she actually has a Dexterity bonus or not) or when the ghost-faced killer flanks the target, the ghost-faced killer's attack deals +1d6 points of damage. This extra damage increases as the ghost-faced killer gains levels. Should the ghost-faced killer score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks only count as sneak attacks within 30 feet.

With a sap (blackjack) or unarmed strike, a ghost-faced killer can make a sneak attack that deals subdual damage instead of normal damage. A ghost-faced killer cannot use a weapon that deals normal damage to deal subdual damage in a sneak attack.

A ghost-faced killer can only sneak attack a living creature with discernable anatomy—undead, constructs, oozes, plants, and incorporeal creatures lack vital areas to attack. The ghost-faced killer must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach a vital spot. The ghost-faced killer cannot sneak attack a creature with concealment or when striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond his reach.

Death Attack (Ex): At 3rd level and higher, the ghost-faced killer has the ability to make devastating death attacks. If the ghost-faced killer studies his victim for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack has an additional effect of possibly paralyzing or killing the target (ghost-faced killer's choice). While studying the victim, the ghost-faced killer can undertake other actions so long as his attention stays focused on the target and the target does not recognize the ghost-faced killer as an enemy. If the victim of such an attack fails a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + the ghost-faced killer's class level + Intelligence modifier) against the kill effect, she dies. If the saving throw fails against the paralysis effect, the victim's body and mind become enervated, rendering her completely helpless and unable to act for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per class level of the ghost-faced killer. If the victim's saving throw succeeds, the attack is just a normal sneak attack. Once the ghost-faced killer has studied his target for 3 rounds, he must make the death attack within the next 3 rounds. If a death attack is attempted and fails (the victim makes her save) or if the ghost-faced killer does not launch the attack within 3 rounds of completing the study, another 3 rounds of study are required before the death attack can be attempted again.

Frightful Attack (Su): Three times per day, a ghost-faced killer can designate a sneak attack as a frightful attack. This is done as a free action before the attack is made. When a ghost-faced killer deals damage with a sneak attack designated as a frightful attack, all those within 30 feet who witness the attack must make a Will saving throw (DC 10 + half the ghost-faced killer's character level + Charisma modifier) or become panicked (see Chapter 3: Running the Game in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for a description of this condition) for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per class level of the ghost-faced killer. Creatures of equal or greater Hit Dice than the ghost-faced killer are immune to his frightful attack. This is a fear effect.

Beyond Touch (Sp): As a standard action, the ghost-faced killer can become incorporeal for a number of rounds equal to his class level plus his Charisma modifier (always at least 1 round). He can do this one time per day at 6th level, two times a day at 8th level, and three times a day at 10th level. If the duration expires while the ghost-faced killer is within a solid

object, he is shunted off to the nearest open space and takes 1d6 points of damage for each 5 feet he must travel in this fashion. Under normal circumstances, the ghost-faced killer cannot affect corporeal creatures or objects, but he might cause damage to them when using his *spirit sword* ability (see below). See Type Modifiers in the introduction to the *Monster Manual* for a description of the incorporeal state. Spells cast by a ghost-faced killer while incorporeal cannot affect corporeal creatures, but they affect incorporeal creatures normally.

The ghost-faced killer cannot make other creatures incorporeal, and objects carried by the ghost-faced killer while incorporeal remain incorporeal until the duration expires or the ghost-faced killer wills it to end. While incorporeal (and not invisible), the ghost-faced killer appears as a semi-translucent version of himself. The ghost-faced killer can end the duration and become corporeal as a free action.

Ghost Sight (Su): An 8th-level ghost-faced killer has the supernatural ability to see ethereal creatures within 20 feet. Ghost sight does not reveal the method by which the etherealness was achieved, nor does it reveal creatures who are hiding, concealed, or otherwise hard to see. At 10th level, the ghost-faced killer can see invisible creatures with the same conditions.

Spirit Sword (Sp): At 7th level, the ghost-faced killer can imbue a melee weapon with the ghost touch special quality for a number of rounds equal to half his class level plus his Charisma modifier (always at least 1 round). The weapon must remain in his hand or the duration of the spirit sword ability prematurely ends. When incorporeal, the ghost-faced killer can attack corporeal foes with a weapon he has imbued with ghost touch; in such cases all the normal bonuses to the Armor Class of the target apply. The weapon is effectively corporeal so long as it remains in the ghost-faced killer's hand and the duration of the *spirit sword* ability has not expired. Thus, the ghost-faced killer can harm foes while incorporeal, and opponents can attempt to disarm the ghost-faced killer. At 9th level, the ghost-faced killer can use this spell-like ability two times per day.

WEIGHTLESS FOOT

"Man in life is light and elusive: He can move about and leaping, leave the ground. Man in death is heavy and still: His body lays on the ground and, sinking into the land, is eaten by worms.

The ten thousand things, the birds and the trees, while they live they are supple and move with the wind. When they die, they are rigid and weigh heavily upon the earth.

Thus the slow and the heavy are the companions of death. The quick and the light are the companions of life. Therefore the path of true enlightenment lies above the ground; weightlessness is a state of bliss."

-Wu Shenyang on the virtue of weightlessness

Rooftop battles and aerial acrobatics, stunning swordplay and cunning kung fu: this is the realm of the weightless foot. Each step can lead them into the air, each leap can become flight. In mountaintop monasteries and desert dojos the Weightless Foot meditate and study, sharpening their martial arts and mental prowess. Yet, things were different once.

In the wake of the second civil war, many samurai were left without a clan to serve. Bands of ronin formed and roamed the land, pillaging villages and robbing whomever they came across. One such band fought or absorbed many of the others, growing in strength and numbers. Formed of the toughest cutthroats and thieves, the band remained a thorn in the new emperor's side despite his best efforts to exterminate it. When he sent spies among them, they were discovered and killed. When overwhelmed by numbers, they faded into the forests or scattered into the cities only to later reform and return to their murderous and lawless ways. Soon they became a clan in their own right, a

WEIGHTLESS FOOT

HIT DIE D8

Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+2	+2	Leap of the clouds, slow fall (20 ft.)
2	+2	+0	+3	+3	Light step (+10), Spring Attack
3	+3	+1	+3	+3	Acrobatics (+10), slow fall (30 ft.)
4	+4	+1	+4	+4	Purity of body, trackless step, Shot on the Run
5	+5	+1	+4	+4	*Dry feet*, slow fall (50 ft.), light step (+20)
6	+6	+2	+5	+5	Purity of mind, Uncanny Step
7	+7	+2	+5	+5	*Light as a feather*, acrobatics (+20)
8	+8	+3	+6	+6	*Light as air*
9	+9	+3	+6	+6	Purity of spirit, improved evasion
10	+10	+3	+7	+7	*Weightlessness*

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a weightless foot, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Alignment: Any non-chaotic, non-evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Base Reflex Save: +2.

Balance: 8 ranks.

Climb: 4 ranks.

Concentration: 4 ranks.

Jump: 6 ranks.

Tumble: 4 ranks.

Feats: Dodge, Iron Will, Mobility, Point Blank Shot.

Special: Must have the evasion special ability.

CLASS SKILLS

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

The weightless foot's class skills are:

STR	Climb, Jump, Swim
DEX	Balance, Escape Artist, Hide, Move Silently, Tumble
CON	Concentration
INT	Search
WIS	Listen, Spot
CHA	Diplomacy, Iaijutsu Focus

clan of ninja. They called themselves the Iron Foot, representing both the weight of their influence on the empire and their martial prowess.

Then one day some of them met Wu Shenyang. At that time Wu Shenyang was not yet an Immortal, but he was well on his way to that path and would not suffer himself to be killed by bandits. Wu Shenyang defeated them handily, as handily as he defeated the next band that was sent against him, and the next, and the still larger band that was sent after that. Finally, the four leaders of the Iron Foot and two hundred of their best fighters confronted Wu Shenyang. With each punch he offered a pearl of wisdom, with each kick he conferred advice on tactics and fighting style. When the combat was over, all the Iron Foot lay groaning around him, and the four leaders begged him to be their master. Thus, the Iron Foot clan became the Weightless Foot clan and took up Wu Shenyang's philosophy of weightlessness. Wu Shenyang taught them that strength comes from mobility and power from knowing when weight should be applied. Before he passed into the realm of the Immortals, Wu Shenyang saw the Weightless Foot become a law-abiding, accepted part of the empire. The people and the emperor came to view them like the many monastic orders that flourished throughout the empire—as warrior-philosophers, valued for the art, literature, and public aid they give to the empire, but also as a strong arm of military might when the empire or innocent individuals are in need.

Rogues and monks make up the majority of the Weightless Foot clan, though samurais, sohais, and fighters multiclassing as rogues or monks are also quite common. Barbarians are virtually unknown among them, but the spellcasting classes are all fairly well represented. Weightless Foot shugenja usually specialize in air as a tribute to the ideal of weightlessnes, whereas wujen generally attempt to master metal, reflecting their clan's focus on martial prowess. NPC weightless foot are often encountered as advisors to the politically powerful as their wise counsel is never influenced by desire for personal gain or corruption.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Characters who take a level of weightless foot gain proficiency in all simple and martial weapons, but they gain no new proficiency with armor.

Leap of the Clouds (Su): A 1st-level weightless foot's jumping distance (vertical or horizontal) is not limited according to her height.

Slow Fall (Ex): At 1st level, a weightless foot within arm's reach of a wall can use the wall to slow her descent. The weightless foot takes damage as if the fall were 20 feet shorter than it actually is. Her ability to slow her fall (that is, to reduce the effective height of the fall when next to a wall) improves with her level until at 5th level she can fall 50 feet without harm. This ability does not stack with the monk ability of the same name.

Light Step (Su): A 2nd-level weightless foot gains a +10 competence bonus to Move Silently checks. At 6th level, this bonus increases to +20. In addition, a weightless foot can always choose to take 10 on a Move Silently check, even when circumstances would normally prevent her from doing so.

Spring Attack: At 2nd level, the weightless foot gains the Spring Attack feat.

Acrobatics (Su): A 3rd-level weightless foot gains a +10 competence bonus to Balance, Climb, Jump, and Tumble checks. At 7th level, this bonus increases to +20. In addition, a weightless foot can always choose to take 10 on a Balance, Climb, Jump, or Tumble Check, even when circumstances would normally prevent her from doing so.

Purity of Body (Ex): At 4th level, the weightless foot gains control over her body's immune system. She gains immunity to all diseases except for magical diseases such as mummy rot and lycanthropy.

Trackless Step (Su): At 4th level and higher, a weightless foot leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked.

Shot on the Run: At 4th level, the weightless foot gains the Shot on the Run feat.

Dry Feet (Sp): A weightless foot of 5th level or higher can cast *water walk* as a sorcerer of a level equal to the weightless foot's class level. Using this spell-like ability is a free action and it functions only for the weightless foot.

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Concentration

Using a spell-like special ability provokes attacks under the same conditions that casting a spell does. Although less useful for martial prestige classes, like the ghost-faced killer, than for a wizard or sorcerer, putting ranks in Concentration allows these characters to enter melee combat and still use their spell-like abilities.

Making a few ranks in Concentration required for prestige classes like the ghost-faced killer is a simple way to get players to make interesting choices about their character—to attain the prestige class they are after, they must devote ranks to a skill they wouldn't otherwise use. It also represents the inner focus that classes like the ghost-faced killer require.

NINJAS IN ANY CAMPAIGN

Players and DMs in a more traditional game might be loath to include ninja prestige classes. Using these ideas effectively is easy, even if the classic idea of the ninja is wrong for your game. Separating the prestige classes in this article from their ninja background is as simple as changing the name of the classes.

If, for example, you wanted to introduce these classes into GREYHAWK or another game with a heavy european flavor, the Poison Fist ninja clans become the warring factions of the Poison Fist assassin's guild, the exotic weightless foot ninja become the fabled Sky Dancers of Ket, and the ghost-faced killers become the Order of Crimson Death, elite killers of the Scarlet Brotherhood.

The weightless foot may use *dry feet* three times per day plus a number of times equal to her Charisma modifier (always at least once).

Purity of Mind (Ex): At 6th level, the weightless foot gains control of her wandering thoughts and can focus all of her mind to a given task. She gains a +5 competence bonus to all Intelligence-based skill checks.

Uncanny Step (Su): At 6th level, a weightless foot can take part of one of her move actions on a wall or other vertical surface so long as she begins and ends her movement on a horizontal surface. If she does not end her movement on a horizontal surface, a weightless foot falls, taking damage appropriate to her height above the ground. Treat the vertical surface as normal floor for the purposes of measuring movement. Passing the boundary from vertical to horizontal is equivalent to 5 feet of movement on a normal floor. Opponents on the floor still get attacks of opportunity if the weightless foot moves through areas they threaten. The weightless foot can take other move actions in conjunction with uncanny step. For example, the weightless foot could use the Spring Attack feat and the Tumble and Jump skills, but she cannot charge a foe.

For instance, Kangling the weightless foot has a base speed of 40 feet. She begins her action with her back to a wall facing some enemies who guard the building across the street. Kangling turns, runs up the wall for 10 feet, and then leaps 15 feet across the street (using the Jump skill and the leap of the clouds ability) to land on the wall of the building the men are guarding. She then moves 5 feet to an open window and ends her movement on a horizontal surface by stepping inside the building through the window.

Light as a Feather (Sp): At 7th level or higher, a weightless foot can cast *feather fall* as a sorcerer of a level equal to the weightless foot's class level. Using this spell-like ability is a free action and it functions only for the weightless foot. The weightless foot may use *light as a feather* three times per day plus a number of times equal to her Charisma modifier (always at least once).

Light as Air (Sp): A weightless foot of 8th level or higher can cast *air walk* as a sorcerer of a level equal to the weightless foot's class level. Using this spell-like ability is a free action and it functions only for the weightless foot. The weightless foot may use *light as air* three times per day plus a number of times equal to her Charisma modifier (always at least once).

Purity of Spirit (Su): At 9th level, a weightless foot gains control of her spirit. She gains a +10 insight bonus to saving throws made to resist level drains or alignment changes.

Improved Evasion (Ex): At 9th level, a weightless foot's evasion ability improves. She still takes no damage on a successful Reflex saving throw against attacks such as a dragon's breath weapon or a *fireball*, but henceforth she takes only half damage on a failed save.

Weightlessness (Sp): A weightless foot of 10th level can cast *fly* as a sorcerer of a level equal to the weightless foot's class level. Using this spell-like ability is a free action and it functions only for the weightless foot. The weightless foot may use *weightlessness* three times per day plus a number of times equal to her Charisma modifier (always at least once).

Multiclass Note: Monk characters can freely multiclass with this class. Monks who have already taken levels in another class may again take monk levels after gaining a level as a weightless foot.

THE SLEEP SPELLS OF YOUR DEMONIC GNOLL ADEPT WEAKEN HIS CRUSADERS.

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LEVELED TREASURES

THINK YOU OUTGREW YOUR WEAPON? THINK AGAIN!

by Stephen Kenson • illustrated by Tom Gianni and Arnie Swekel

The *Dungeon Master's Guide* describes hundreds of magic items characters can find or make in their adventuring careers, ranging from the simplest potions or scrolls to the most powerful artifacts. The *Dungeon Master's Guide* also offers advice for Dungeon Masters on what sorts of magic weapons and armor are appropriate for characters of a particular level. You're certainly not going to award a 1st-level paladin a *holy avenger* sword, nor would a DM want to reward a 20th-level character with a mere *+1 dagger*.

But what should the player characters do when they get newer (and better) magic items? When a fighter whose *+2 longsword* has served him well for a few levels comes upon a *frost brand*, what does he do with the old sword? He could sell it, the approach many characters take in that situation, but that could be difficult unless there is a city or town of sufficient size nearby that can afford to buy a magic item, especially if the old item is a valuable one. He could give it to another character who doesn't have as good a weapon, but most characters in a party should be fairly well balanced in that respect, and it raises the question of what that character is going to do with her old magic weapon. He could leave it behind, but most characters aren't going to simply discard a valuable magic item.

What if the fighter doesn't want to give up his old sword? After all, it's the sword he used to single-handedly slay the medusa that nearly killed the entire party; the sword he found after their struggle against the minotaur bandit chieftain and his band. Magic items can be important mementos in a campaign, and players might be reluctant to give them up. Sure, he could just forget about the new *frost band* and keep his old sword, but is it fair that players should be penalized for good roleplaying and sticking to the way their characters would act?

In fantasy fiction, characters often have powerful (or potentially powerful) magic items right from the start of their careers. King Arthur pulled the sword from the stone as a boy and gained Excalibur as a fairly young man. Sturm Brightblade carried his father's legendary namesake sword in the DRAGONLANCE trilogy, which turned out to be a powerful magic item, but not necessarily right away.

Consider this situation: A player approaches you as Dungeon Master and says, "I want my paladin to have a holy sword she inherited from her father, who was one of the greatest knights of the kingdom." Assuming you have no problem with a player character descended from a great hero, what do you do about the sword? One option is to say the *holy avenger* belonging to the paladin's father was lost in his final battle against the forces of evil. The paladin can take on a quest to find it, and you can wait until the character is high enough level before you allow her to have it. But what if the player wants to have the sword from the start? You certainly don't want to put such a powerful weapon into the hands of a 1st-level character, but you also don't want to say that the "legendary holy sword" of a great champion was just a masterwork weapon.

Leveled Magic Items

The key to solving these problems lies in allowing items to grow and improve as their owners advance in level. In other words, create "leveled" magic items.

Here's how it works: The item starts out as a low-power magic item, but the item holds the potential for greater magic. As its owner advances in level, she can spend experience points to improve the item's abilities, making it a +2 item or activating some other special ability. Thus, the item grows in power as its owner does, making it less important for the character to discard it in favor

Alternative Awards

D&D campaigns with a lot of leveled magic items tend to give out less magical treasure to characters, since characters usually hold on to leveled treasures longer. This can lead to slower character advancement, especially if a character has more than one leveled treasure.

One way Dungeon Masters can compensate for this is by giving out bonus XP awards usable only for advancing leveled items in place of the treasure the characters would have otherwise received. So instead of finding a new *+3 sword* in a monster's hoard, a character gets enough experience to advance his leveled magic sword to +3 instead. This allows the DM to "fine tune" how quickly leveled items and the PCs improve as the campaign unfolds.

of a new magic item. This allows magic items to have a longer "lifespan" within the campaign and makes for unique and interesting items.

Using Leveled Items

Leveled magic items are weapons, shields, and armor that start out with a +1 enhancement. The base item is just like any other according to the rules in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The Dungeon Master (or the character creating the item) then determines what the item's additional levels are and what abilities it gains. Leveled items can't have an enhancement bonus greater than +5 or more than ten levels of power (a total effective "bonus" of +10). Many items have fewer than 10 levels.

Once the character has possession of the item, he can begin devoting experience points to improve it. The experience cost to "activate" a higher level of the item comes from the "Leveled Magic Item XP" chart. Experience points can be given to an item at any time, but powers are not available until the full amount is met and the character has achieved the required level. Thus, the second level of a leveled heavy mace could be *speed*, but the character would not have access to this ability or any other until he reaches his 11th character level and a total of 10,000 XP has been spent.

A character cannot give up so much experience that he drops to a lower level, and he can only increase an item's bonus equivalent by +1 per every two levels plus one. Thus, a 7th-level PC could have a leveled item with a bonus equivalent of no more than +3. Devoting experience to the item requires a full-round action; thereafter, the item is immediately useful up to the level of experience the character has devoted.

If an item is a double weapon, each head must have a separate amount of experience devoted to it. Experience devoted to a double weapon does not need to be evenly distributed.

The wielder or wearer of the leveled weapon or armor only gets the power level of experience he has devoted to it and the base +1 enhancement. Thus, a new user must devote experience to the item before he can access more than the +1 enhancement. Once a character has devoted experience to an item, that item will always function for that character as though he had that level of XP devoted. This experience cannot be retrieved or erased from the weapon. The Dungeon Master can also restrict a player from putting XP into a leveled item if that item was not used in some way to earn the experience points: You can't leave your leveled items at home, go adventuring, and then bring XP home to "charge up" the item.

Creating Leveled Items

To create a leveled item, one must meet all the feat, spell, skill, race, and alignment requirements necessary to make a normal version of the armor, shield, or weapon with all of its powers. Thus, a leveled item that goes up to a +10 bonus equivalent requires all the same requirements that a normal +10 item would. The difference lies in the costs to create the item. It's cheaper to make a leveled item than it is to make a normal item of an equivalent bonus.

The market prices for leveled items are determined as follows:

Weapon: Equivalent enhancement bonus squared x 2,000 gp x 0.6
Armor: Equivalent enhancement bonus squared x 1,000 gp x 0.6

These costs are calculated in the chart below:

Equivalent Bonus	Weapon	Armor
+2	4,800 gp	2,400 gp
+3	10,800 gp	5,400 gp
+4	19,200 gp	9,600 gp
+5	30,000 gp	15,000 gp
+6	43,200 gp	21,600 gp
+7	58,800 gp	29,400 gp
+8	76,800 gp	38,400 gp
+9	97,200 gp	48,600 gp
+10	120,000 gp	60,000 gp

Gold piece and XP costs to create the item are determined normally. Each head of a double weapon must be enchanted separately following the same rules.

Enhancement bonuses and other powers can be added to a leveled item once it is created, so long as the total enhancement bonus does not exceed +5 and the total equivalent bonus does not exceed +10. The cost for adding these new enhancements is figured as though they are being added to a normal item with an equivalent bonus equal to the leveled item's total equivalent bonus. Thus, if a sorcerer added the flaming special ability to a leveled longsword that has a +5 equivalent bonus, the cost and requirements would be equal to those that would result from adding the flaming special ability to a *+5 longsword*. Such added enhancements are immediately useful to all who use the item.

LEVELED MAGIC ITEM XP

Equivalent Bonus	Required Level	Total XP Weapon Needed†	Total XP Armor Needed†
+2	5	1,600	800
+3	7	3,600	1,800
+4	9	6,400	3,200
+5	11	10,000	5,000
+6*	13	14,400	7,200
+7*	15	19,600	9,800
+8*	17	25,600	12,800
+9*	19	32,400	16,200
+10*	20+	40,000	20,000

*Magic items can't have an enhancement bonus this high. This number provides the experience cost for the appropriate bonus equivalent when special abilities raise the item's bonus equivalent that high.

†This is the total number of XP that must be spent to attain that level.

Restrictions

Improving the level of a magic item might not be as easy as giving up experience points and using the item in adventures. The Dungeon Master might also require certain prerequisites to activate an item's powers. These can include any or all of the following:

Alignment: The owner must be of a particular alignment to activate some or all of the item's powers, or even just to put XP into the item. This restriction can prevent some items from falling into "the wrong hands," while other restrictions might encourage a subtle shift in alignment. For example, an item might require a chaotic alignment to activate its low-level powers and an evil alignment to activate its high-level ones. To use the item to its best effect, the owner is subtly encouraged to take more and more chaotic actions to gain more power, then more and more evil ones.

Class Ability: The owner must have a particular class ability, such as arcane spellcasting, divine spellcasting, a paladin's divine grace, and so forth, to activate the item's powers. Alternatively, the owner might have to belong to a particular class (usually because it requires a class ability available to only one class, such as the aforementioned divine grace of a paladin).

Deed: The owner of the item must perform a particular deed in order to activate its next level of power. This task could be anything from slaying a specific type of monster to performing a religious or arcane ritual over the item at an appointed place or time of the year. Perhaps the owner must complete the quest the item's previous owner attempted (and failed). The possibilities are limited solely by the DM's imagination. If the character successfully performs the action, the item's next level of power can be activated by the appropriate expenditure of XP.

Knowledge: The owner must have a certain piece of information to unlock the item's high-level powers. For example, the item's name, its creator's name, where it was made, why it was made, who used it previously, and what the runes written on it mean could all be required to activate one or all of the item's powers. Finding the information can launch new adventures.

Race: The character must be of a particular race (or even subrace) to access the item's higher level powers. Alternatively, the character might have to belong to a particular bloodline, such as a royal family, or be a descendant of the item's original owner.

Instead of being absolute prohibitions, some of these restrictions—like Alignment, Class, and Race—could be "favored" qualities of the item. Characters lacking the item's favored quality must pay a greater amount of experience (between 10-20% more is a good figure) to activate the powers. This makes the item useful for everyone, but better for some characters than others.

Restrictions make good adventure hooks, particularly the deed and knowledge restrictions, sending characters off to perform certain deeds or consult with wise loremasters so they can increase the power of their magic items.

SAMPLE LEVELED WEAPONS

BREVEN'S BULWARK

A cleric of Heironeous named Arthur Breven created *Breven's Bulwark* to evaluate the valor and dedication of his temple's paladins. He gave the shield to those who showed great promise. If they could not activate the shield's *reflection* quality before two full years had passed, they were deemed unworthy and asked to return the shield. Should the chosen paladin be able to activate that power, Breven promised to reward her with *Breven's Bulwark*, followers, servants, and a temple-keep for the worthy paladin to use as a foundation to build up the legend of Heironeous's glory. As yet, no paladin has been equal to the task.

Breven's Bulwark is a *leveled small wooden shield*. For those who have not devoted experience to it, it acts as a *+1 small wooden shield*.

Breven's Bulwark

Item Level	Required XP	Equivalent Bonus	Enhancement
1	7,200	+6	*reflection*
2	9,800	+7	*+2 enhancement*
3	12,800	+8	*fortification, light*
4	16,200	+9	*bashing*
5	20,000	+10	*blinding*

Caster Level: 14th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *blindness/deafness, bull's strength, limited wish* or *miracle, searing light, spell turning;* **Market Price:** 60,153 gp; **Cost to Create:** 30,075 gp + 2,406 XP.

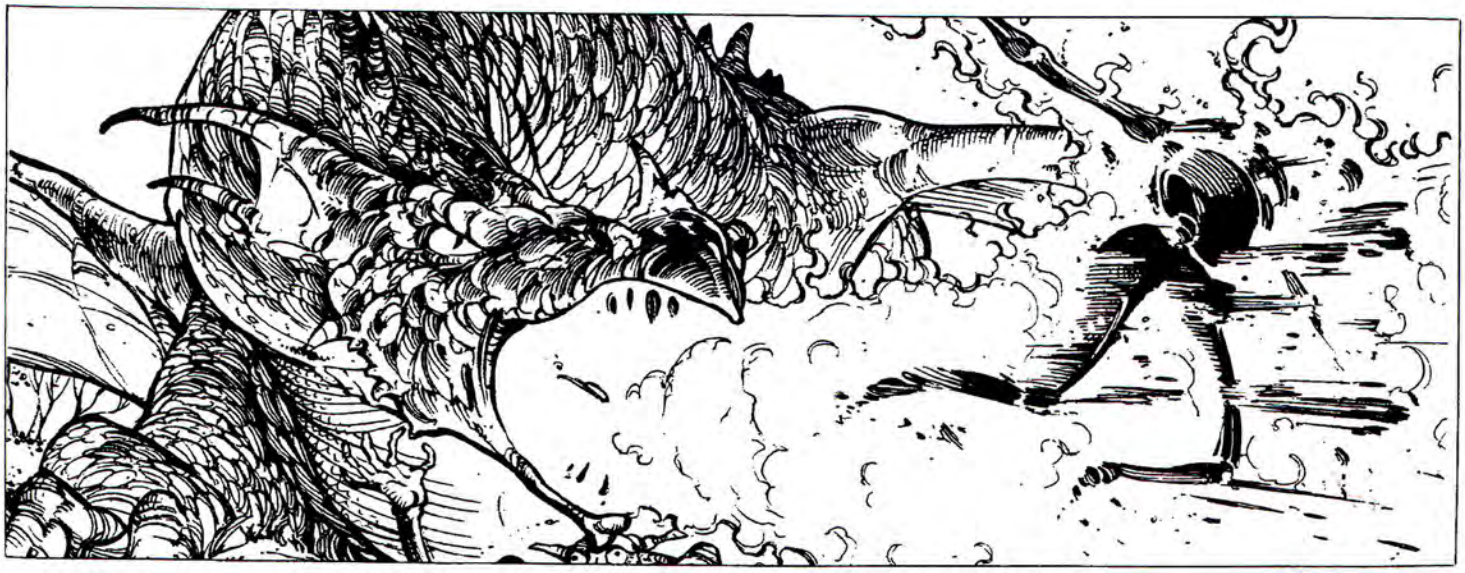
STORMFANG

Stormfang is the community weapon of the gnomes of the village of Clovenstone. Once borne by the gnome hero-god Burl Stromscheppen, it is said the weapon's blows carry the weight of his hands. Gnomes that show great courage in the face of dangers to the village are rewarded with *Stormfang*. They are allowed to carry it for as long as they live or until they choose to bequeath the treasure to another worthy hero of the village.

Stormfang is a *leveled gnome hook hammer*. Both the hammer and pick ends function as +1 weapons in the hands of any user.

	Hammer Head			Pick Head		
Item Level	Required XP	Equivalent Bonus	Enhancement	Required XP	Equivalent Bonus	Enhancement
1	1,600	+2	*+2 enhancement*	1,600	+2	*+2 enhancement*
2	3,600	+3	*shock*	3,600	+3	*keen*
3	6,400	+4	*mighty cleaving*	6,400	+4	*+3 enhancement*
4	10,000	+5	*frost*	14,400	+6	*thundering*
5		-	-	25,600	+8	*shocking burst*
6		-	-	40,000	+10	*icy burst*

Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *blindness/deafness, call lightning* or *lightning bolt, chill metal* or *ice storm, divine power, keen edge;* **Market Price:** 150,620 gp; **Cost to Create:** 75,310 gp + 6,025 XP.



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FLYING LEAPS, The Fantastic World

The jaw-dropping beauty and thrilling action of Ang Lee's recent film **Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon** *shines a new spotlight on a school of wildly entertaining movies from Hong Kong. Lee's fusion of art-film style and martial arts bravura didn't just thrill seasoned genre fans; it brought the jaded critics and industry flacks to their feet in successive film festival standing ovations.*

As **Star Wars** *and* **Raiders of the Lost Ark** *did in the mid-'70s,* **Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon** *renews beloved genre archetypes with brilliantly crafted music, costumes, sets, choreography, and characterization. In this case, though, most Western movie-goers are unfamiliar with the source material it draws on. Many will be content to enjoy Lee's film and leave it at that. Many D&D fans, however, will want to delve deeper into Hong Kong fantasy films because they provide fabulous inspiration for gaming. Whether you simply want to play your monk character more vividly or wish to run an entire game in the high-flying Hong Kong style, a veritable treasure trove of cinematic delights awaits you. And with the success of* **Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon**, *you can bet that these films will soon be easier to find than ever.*

Roots and Beginnings

When film first came to China in the 1920s, it didn't take long for bright directors to put martial artists in front of the camera. Even at that early date, the filmmakers weren't creating their stories from scratch, but simply transferring the age-old mythic themes and acrobatic displays of Peking Opera to a new medium. What we unschooled Westerners see as a mixture of martial arts and fantasy elements is actually part of a seamless whole. In the classic stories of the Peking Opera, gods, heroes, and monsters freely intermingle, fighting and dying alongside one another. Key to the mythology of martial arts is the idea that advanced practitioners acquire supernatural powers, so it's no surprise that as early as the 1928 silent film *The Burning of Red Lotus Monastery* rival kung fu fighters zap one another with energy blasts.

Don't expect to find this epic in your local video store—or anywhere, for that matter. Preservation of early Asian cinema is almost nonexistent. At your luckiest, you might stumble across a special screening of one of the 1960s epics of director King Hu, like *A Touch of Zen* (1969) and *Dragon Inn* (1966). These influential works serve as the foundation of the modern generation of martial arts fantasies. *A Touch of Zen* treats seriously the Buddhist philosophical underpinnings of the material; its reverence and stately pacing are closer in spirit to *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* than its wacky, gleefully impious descendants of the '80s and '90s.

In the '70s, elements of the fantastic began to fade from martial arts cinema. Bruce Lee brought serious martial arts to the screen. In the wake of his death, a legion of imitators huffed and puffed their way through innumerable fight movies, all virtually plot-free and shot too cheaply to allow for special effects. Even the big-budget period kung fu epics produced by the Shaw Brothers often kept their heroes' feet squarely on the ground. Jackie Chan came to the dying genre's rescue by pairing death-defying stunt work with slapstick comedy. But you'll never see Jackie flying through the air or emitting energy blasts.

It was director Tsui Hark who brought the fantasy back into martial arts with 1983's *Zu: Warriors From the Mystic Mountain*. Even without other filmmakers jumping on the bandwagon, this prolific and inventive producer and director could have churned out an entire genre on his own. *Zu: Warriors From the Mystic Mountain* is readily

# of Hong Kong Cinema

DEADLY SILKS

BY ROBIN D. LAWS

available in outlets that stock Hong Kong videos; it ushers in the current era of wuxia film.

The term wuxia, which lacks a literal translation, is usually colloquially rendered as "flying people movie." The term is also sometimes used in movie dialogue to refer to "the world of martial arts," the underground network of kung fu heroes and villains who live, love, and do battle in parallel to China's official world of bureaucrats, merchants, and ordinary people.

Many wuxia movies are adaptations of serial novels by Hong Kong newspaperman Louis Cha, who wrote swords-clashing fantasy epics during the '60s and '70s, under the pen name Jin Yong.

Culture Shock

If *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is your first wuxia film, you're in for a bit of a shock when you begin checking out its rougher-edged cousins. Although inexpensive by Hollywood standards, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is a lavish production compared to most Hong Kong movies. Don't expect music anywhere near as entrancing as classical composer Tan Dun's score for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon;* instead, prepare for cheesy, interchangeable soundtracks hammered out on '80s-era synthesizers. You might also want to steel yourself, possibly by drinking several cups of corn syrup, for the inevitable eruption of Cantopop ballads during emotional montage sequences. Many of the actors are, in Hong Kong, thought of primarily as pop singers. Even Jackie Chan doubles as a crooner, boasting an extensive CD catalog.

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon is performed in the stately Mandarin dialect and presented with subtitles that not only make sense but display impeccable spelling and grammar. Hong Kong movies speak the street-smart Cantonese dialect; their subtitles are translated in the space of an afternoon. Even if more care were taken, the subtitles would still be doomed to moments of incomprehensibility, since much of Cantonese is colloquial slang that can't even be properly translated into other Chinese dialects. It takes a while to train yourself to stop laughing at the mistakes and odd wordings that pepper even comparatively good translations. Every so often, a line will make no sense at all.

Even more importantly, the Hong Kong afficionado needs to acquire an appreciation for the broad portrayal of emotions. No matter what else it is—wuxia, comedy, guns-blazing action, gangster epic—a Hong Kong movie is almost invariably also a melodrama. Remember, it all comes from the Peking Opera tradition, which, like Italian Opera, is filled with over-the-top emotion.

Comedy scenes are just as broad, showing a love of potty humor and disregard for sensitivities of any stripe. (In the age of *South Park, Something About Mary,* and actor Tom Green, this might not require as big an adjustment as it used to.)

Don't expect tight dividing lines between melodrama and comedy. The tone of Hong Kong movies can turn on a dime, and that gray-haired old kung fu master might suddenly spout curse words for comic effect. Scenes of slapstick goofiness can be followed by horrible tragedy.

And one more thing: Happy endings are the exception, not the norm. Asian audiences find no ending more romantic than the death of a hero, a heroine, or both. Just as Hollywood screenwriters stretch the limits of plausibility to make everything come out all right in the end, their Hong Kong brethren bend their plots to create tragic endings.

KUNG FU FEATS

The following feats allow accomplished fighters to duplicate frequently-seen wuxia powers.

CHOKE HOLD
(Oriental Adventures)

CIRCLE KICK
(Sword and Fist)

DEFENSIVE THROW
(Oriental Adventures)

EAGLE CLAW ATTACK
(Sword and Fist, Oriental Adventures)

ENDURANCE
(Player's Handbook)

EYES IN THE BACK OF YOUR HEAD
(Sword and Fist)

FALLING STAR STRIKE
(Oriental Adventures)

FISTS OF IRON
(Sword and Fist, Oriental Adventures)

FLYING KICK
(Oriental Adventures)

FREEZING THE LIFEBLOOD
(Oriental Adventures)

GRAPPLING BLOCK
(Oriental Adventures)

GREAT STAMINA
(Oriental Adventures)

KHARMIC STRIKE
(Oriental Adventures)

KNOCK-DOWN
(Sword and Fist)

LIGHTNING FISTS
(Sword and Fist)

PAIN TOUCH
(Sword and Fist, Oriental Adventures)

PRONE ATTACK
(Sword and Fist, Oriental Adventures)

SNATCH ARROWS
(Sword and Fist)

STEALTHY
(Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting)

STRONG SOUL
(Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting)

STUNNING FIST
(Player's Handbook)

THROW ANYTHING
(Sword and Fist)

UNBALANCING STRIKE
(Oriental Adventures)

WHIRLWIND ATTACK
(Player's Handbook)

The Rules of Wuxia

Every "flying people" movie makes its own rules according to the needs of its plot. However, the following generalizations offer a basis to work from when importing wuxia elements into your D&D games.

1. Everybody flies. Or, rather, everybody of any note in the world of martial arts flies. Fighters fly. Magicians fly. Priests fly. Every high-level character in a wuxia-inspired D&D campaign should be able to treat the laws of gravity as mere guidelines. (See the Flying Player Characters sidebar.)

2. Training matters. Kung fu fighters spend most of their time training. Inexperienced fighters must find experienced masters to train under. They call their masters sifu, and even after they leave a sifu's tutelage, they owe him the same degree of unquestioning, humble respect. It is not unusual for a wuxia hero to find herself rescuing a captured sifu or seeking vengeance against the enemies who killed him. By observing a fighter in action, an experienced warrior can identify his style; if the fighter studied under a famous sifu, the keen observer can tell that, too.

Training sequences are often shown in detail in Hong Kong movies. The 1978 Shaw Brothers film *Master Killer* is almost entirely devoted to an incredibly involved training sequence. On the other hand, it's hard to justify training times for other classes, like barbarians or rogues, and it's not fair to place a burden on some classes and not on others. Even if everyone in the group plays a monk, training sequences become difficult for DMs to portray in an interesting way after a few times. It's probably best for characters to talk as if they undergo rigorous training but hand-wave the exact circumstances under which it occurs, so that it all takes place offstage.

3. Secrets matter. Martial artists keep their training methods secret from outsiders. These secrets can be stolen and used by villainous characters who, fortunately, usually lack the discipline to completely master the secrets. Nevertheless, even partial ability often makes these thieves terrible threats for the heroes to put down. DMs should treat the theft of school secrets as the handy plot device it is. A villain might invade a temple friendly to the heroes to steal its kung fu secrets. Or, he might have done so many years ago, committing acts that cry out for vengeance as soon as he reappears on the scene.

4. There is no such thing as an anonymous high-level character. The top warriors all know each other by reputation, if not from the firsthand experience of ringing swords. (For this purpose, treat all character classes as equal; notorious rogues are as famous as legendary Buddhist exorcists, and so on.) As soon as you accumulate 7 levels, defeat a known warrior of 7th level or above, or, at the DM's discretion, perform some other great and notable deed, word of your activities spreads like wildfire. Some warriors might become notorious even sooner, especially if they are taught by, or fight alongside, senior warriors of great fame.

When you become famous, you can expect other famed warriors to know:

1: Your name, including distinctive nickname, if any;

2: your fighting style, distinctive weapon, or signature move;

3: your allies, if they are also known to the world of martial arts;

4: your sifu, if any;

5: the most famous warrior you defeated, or what is otherwise your most notable deed.

Conversely, your character automatically knows all of these things about the other major figures of the martial arts world. You do not need to roll the dice to call on this information. You've gathered it over time by talking to your fellow warriors and exchanging gossip with weaponsmiths, innkeepers, and other tradesmen whose businesses bring them into contact with your kind. As soon as that seven-foot-tall bald man wielding a fan of metal knives lands in your courtyard and threatens vengeance against you for your role in the theft of the red jade dragon, you can call out "Iron Fan Cho!" with confidence, knowing that you've correctly identified the man who wants to kill you.

The martial arts underground is much more than a mutual recognition society, however. It is a melancholy world in which great accomplishment separates its members from normal society. By becoming a mighty martial artist, you step outside the boundaries of a rigidly stratified culture in which every person must remember his or

her place, on pain of death. You exist in a sort of social no-man's-land. On one level, you are physically more powerful than almost anyone else. On another, you are beneath the lowliest street-sweeper because you have sidestepped the limits of order and respectability. Noble bureaucrats of strong character might treat virtuous martial artists with respect, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Usually, others will view you with both contempt and fear. They might pay enemy martial artists to drive you out of their territories and into their rival's. If they're members of a conspiracy to take over the Imperial Court, they might try to capture, kill, or frame you.

Rest does not come easy for the mighty warrior. Your merest attempt to sit and slurp some congee (bean curd soup) at a roadside food stand will likely be interrupted by young warriors anxious to rob you (if they are inexperienced and do not know you) or to make a name for themselves by defeating you. The world offers you a seemingly never-ending supply of these foolish upstarts, who seem to exist only to allow you to display your martial prowess. Although they rarely pose a genuine threat, they do make it difficult to maintain a low profile or simply enjoy a quiet meal.

As you grow older and wiser, these annoyances begin to seem petty in comparison to the true melancholy of the martial artist. It is nearly impossible to retire peacefully from the world of martial arts. You can't retreat back to mundane life: Enemies will hound you, and old obligations of honor and vengeance will continue to draw you back into a life of bloodshed and warfare. Retreat to a life of spiritual meditation might seem like a noble way out, yet many of the great heroes of martial arts spend years in search of mystical enlightenment, only to find that their ties to the material world prevent them from making their final breakthroughs. Instead, they must return to the world and again pick up their swords and staves to do battle against their foes.

Romantic love brings no solace either. The ranks of martial artists are filled by both men and women afflicted by unresolved romantic yearnings toward one another. Even those few unhampered by vows or obligations preventing them from admitting their feelings know that the world is unfriendly to the happiness of sword-swinging lovers. The heroes of wuxia know that they will die as they have lived, as warriors. Nothing hastens tragic doom more than a declaration of love between warriors. Romantic love is like the butterfly: It is beautiful, easily buffeted by fate's wings, and inevitably short-lived.

5. Watch out for eunuchs! When your foes are not merely unscrupulous rival members of the wuxia underground in search of your sifu's secret technique books, they are eunuchs. The Imperial Court, by long tradition, relies on castrated high officials to administer the day-to-day affairs of the national government. In theory, the inability of a eunuch to sire rivals to the throne renders him utterly loyal to the Emperor. In practice, castration generally makes the eunuch cranky and power-mad. Eunuch warriors and magicians ruthlessly strike out at all who would loosen their corrupt hold on the land.

6. Gender confusion is the order of the day. Eunuchs are not the only members of the wuxia world who defy sexual norms. Cross-dressing and magical gender changes run rampant in Hong Kong fantasy films. Whether the princess is dressing as a man to conceal her true identity or the evil dowager is played by a male actor, these movies leap over gender boundaries as heedlessly as their heroes dash over treetops.

FLYING PLAYER CHARACTERS

Following the number one rule of wuxia, all high-level characters in a wuxia campaign gain the ability to fly. Upon reaching 10th level, regardless of class, a character can fly at a speed of 30 feet with average maneuverability as described on page 69 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. A flyer with average maneuverability cannot hover or fly backward, but she can turn up to 45 degrees after moving at least 5 feet. A character that meets the requirements may choose to take the Improved Flying feat and increase her flying ability from average to good.

IMPROVED FLYING [General]
You can fly better than average.
Prerequisite: Base attack Bonus +11, Dex 13+
Benefit: Your flight maneuverability advances to good. As a result, you can hover in the air, fly backward, and turn up to 90 degrees midflight.

The Films

Enough with the generalities. It's time to go straight to the source of inspiration and check out some of the movies themselves. This list of titles represents the cream of the crop of Hong Kong fantasy films.

Zu: Warriors of the Magic Mountain (1983), director: Tsui Hark.

This is the film that started it all. With an accent more on wild imagery and inventive (if low-tech) special effects than on recognizable characterization or a clear storyline, this festival of glowing-eyed monsters, caber-tossed logs, magic swords, ogres chained to giant rocks, blood monster poisoning, possession by evil forces, and (of course) high-flying, fast-paced action looks a little primitive in comparison to some of the later movies it inspired, but is still plenty of fun. And, when looked at as game inspiration, its succession of fantasy elements and zigzagging plot line are pluses. This probably serves up more monster, spell, and plot ideas per square inch of celluloid than any other film mentioned in this article.

Chinese Ghost Story
Part I (1987), director: Ching Siu Tung; Part II (1990), Part III (1991).

This Tsui Hark-produced series mixes fantasy, comedy, and horror, and probably serves as your best starting point for this genre. Playing irreverently with ghost stories from China's Qing Dynasty, the first movie pits a slightly hapless young tax collector, aided by a no-nonsense Taoist priest and swordsman, against an array of ghosts (many of them seductive sirens) and some amusingly primitive stop-action zombies. In the second film, a young priest joins the tax collector, and the supernatural opposition escalates to include a giant centipede and an undead ogre who uses his snapping ribcage as an attack. Part three takes place a hundred years later and tells the tale of a young monk who gets drawn into the battle against evil, as personified by a sorcerous tree that fights with an elongated tongue.

The Swordsman
Part I (1990), director: King Hu (credited) Tsui Hark & Ching Siu Tung (actual); Part II (1991), director: Ching Siu Tung; Part III (1993), director: Ching Siu Tung.

Evil eunuchs set in motion an incomprehensibly complex plot (based on a Louis Cha novel), in which an ancient scroll full of martial arts secrets becomes the object of much kinetic kung fu action. In part two, Jet Li and Michelle Yeoh take over as heroes. They battle the man who originally found the magic scroll in the first movie; the scroll has transformed him into Asia the Invincible, who is both a whirlwind of martial arts destruction and a beautiful but implacable woman (played by Brigitte Lin). Part three, also known as *The East Is Red,* turns Lin's villainess into an antiheroine. Among its banner scenes is her one-woman takeover of a Spanish galleon.

Bride With White Hair
Part I (1993), director: Ronny Yu; Part II (1993), director: David Wu and Ronny Yu (uncredited).

A warrior takes on an evil cult run by a set of conjoined brother-sister twins, only to fall in love with their top assassin, a feral woman raised by wolves. This wuxia epic is distinguished by its gorgeous cinematography and melancholy sense of romantic doom. In part two, white-haired wolf woman Lin wreaks vengeance on her ex-lover's martial arts school, as he searches for a way to restore her former beauty.

Green Snake
(1993), director: Tsui Hark.

Two gorgeous, mysterious women conceal a shameful secret: they're snakes who have pulled themselves up by their mystical bootstraps to assume human form. Trouble comes when one falls in love and another attracts the attention of a fanatical Taoist priest bent on sending all animals in human form back to their primal conditions. This film is interesting for its unique story and the moral ambiguity of its heroes and villain.

Kung Fu Cult Master
(1993), director: Wong Jing.

Forget the confusing plot and simply dig Jet Li in his most outrageously aerial role as Mo-Kai, an orphan adopted by a great sifu (Sammo Hung). Mo-Kai is scorned by the other students until he learns the secret solar stance. Priceless elements include the comic relief bat-winged character, Green Bat,

and the moment in which a surprised Mo-Kai reckons that his mighty opponent must have 10,000 experience points to his 8,000. The commercial failure of this energetic mishmash signaled the end of the great wuxia boom of the '80s and '90s.

Dragon Inn
(1992), director: Raymond Lee.

Heroes flee across a desert with kids they've rescued from an evil eunuch sorcerer. They arrive at an inn in the middle of the desert, which happens to be crawling with martial artists. Maggie Cheung is great as the cynical innkeeper, but watch out for the secret ingredient in her sticky buns. Its eye-popping moment occurs in the climactic sand-dune battle, in a moment of gory "chef fu." This is a remake of a mid-'60s King Hu classic.

Moon Warriors
(1992), director: Sammo Hung.

In this film, a poor but honest fisherman, whose best friend is a killer whale, protects the Emperor from his usurping brother and gets mixed up in a love triangle. Maybe not the best wuxia film ever, but it has a great cast, and its final sequence is one of the best illustrations of the principle that every major character in one of these films knows a martial arts fighting style. Yes, we're talking whale fu.

New Legend of Shaolin
(1994), director: Wong Jing.

Jet Li and his scrappy young son are the only survivors of a massacre that wipes out the Shaolin temple; he races with a deformed sorcerer who rides a killer cart to find a treasure map tattooed on the backs of a gaggle of children. Check it out for a great performance from prepubescent star Xie Miao, who already has the "don't mess with Clint" glare down pat.

Mr. Vampire
(1985), director: Ricky Lau.

A mighty eye-browed exorcist, alternately aided and hindered by his two bumpkin assistants, deals with a plague of hopping vampires and a seductive ghost. This is not a wire-fu film, but a period horror-comedy that launched countless imitations, many of them featuring the formidable-looking Lam Ching-Ying as a straight-arrow exorcist. This film is fun if you're already tuned into the goofy, lowbrow sense of humor typical of Hong Kong comedies.

Once Upon A Time In China
(1991), director: Tsui Hark.

Except for gravity-defying kung fu, this film lacks fantasy elements but is nonetheless a classic worth mentioning, with many sequels trailing behind it. Jet Li plays Wong Fei Hong, an idealistic doctor and posterior-booting hero, fighting off bandits and British imperialists in 1870s Canton. Wong Fei Hong was a real person, and he has been portrayed in countless Chinese movies and TV shows over the decades; he's sort of a combination Lone Ranger and Marcus Welby.

Savior of the Soul
(1991), director: Corey Yuen and David Lai.

A super-cool assassin (played by Anita Mui) blinds arch-villain Silver Fox (Aaron Kwok), and only a handsome city mercenary (Andy Lau) can protect her from his vengeful clutches. This movie, which unfolds like a comic book you've only started reading with the fourth issue, is one of many that mixes modern-day and wuxia elements. It doesn't make much sense, but the imagery is great, and the characters are extremely cool. You can import the characters (minus pistols) into your D&D game or look at it as inspiration for a genre-spanning campaign.

LEARNING MORE

This article should serve as an introduction to the world of Hong Kong cinema. Thanks to the stateside success of performers like Jet Li, Chow Yun-Fat, and Michelle Yeoh, Hong Kong movies are now easier than ever to find in video stores, even the unhip ones. The best way to learn about this film genre is to see what you can find on your local shelves, rent movies as you can, and go from there.

Useful books include *Hong Kong Babylon,* by Frederic Dannen & Barry Long, which couples an excellent listing of the central Hong Kong films with an exposé of triad involvement in the Hong Kong film industry. *Hong Kong Action Cinema,* by Bey Logan, delves more exhaustively into the history of Chinese action movies and is lavishly illustrated with photos. This book will help you match actors' names to faces. *Sex and Zen and A Bullet in the Head,* by Stefan Hammond & Mike Wilkins, provides a more tongue-in-cheek introduction to the field, with fun lists of bizarre subtitles and other less-than-reverent sidebars.

Finally, the Internet is crammed with Hong Kong movie websites and discussion groups. Pop a few relevant keywords into your favorite search engine and your kung fu will undergo an immediate power increase.

Tsujoku Island—a secluded tropical realm that appears on few maps; most sailors have only heard the name whispered in awe and have no idea of where to find the fabled location. The lowlands of Tsujoku Island are said to be thick with primeval jungles, while the core of the island is dominated by rugged stony mountains lit by the hellish glow of the actively volcanic Mount Kijo. Stories abound of the primitive people who dwell in villages along the jungle-shrouded coastline of Tsujoku and of the gold, jewelry, and gemstones they wear.

The lure of huge caches of gold and gems has fueled the dreams of pirates and merchants alike for hundreds of years, but precious few have seen the shores of Tsujoku Island, and fewer still have lived to return. The survivors who return rich from the island refuse to go there ever again or to guide any who wish to go there, for the tropical island is home to colossal monsters . . . the dreaded kaiju.

Towering over any creature they encounter, crushing trees beneath their massive bodies, the kaiju have long held the attention of dreamers and explorers. Some believe them to be the primal forces of nature, hurricanes and earthquakes made flesh. Others believe that they are destructive engines of terror and revenge sent by the gods. A rare few believe that they are the defenders of the world, guarding it against a terrible assault from beyond the earthly realm that was prophesied long ago. Whatever their purpose, the thunderous steps and deafening roars of the kaiju are the stuff of legend.

Tsujoku is known to be the lair of three kaiju in particular. The most famous and possibly the most dangerous of these three kaiju is Gareshona, a massive quadruped that seems to be the guardian and protector of the island. Those who manage to reach the shores and proceed to abuse the native population tell stories of the arrival of a colossal metallic beast whose roars could deafen or knock prone any who hear them. Gareshona is said to harness lightning to blast intruders, burrow through solid stone, and swallow ships in a single gulp.

Although Gareshona might be the most infamous of the kaiju on Tsujoku, the dreaded Sharugu is most often encountered. This behemoth of an octopus dwells in the deep ocean trenches that surround Tsujoku, and it often

THUNDER and FIRE

The World of the Kaiju

by James Jacobs · illustrated by Ron Spencer

senses the passage of ships overhead and rises to the surface to consume them. When Sharugu approaches, the sea turns black. Most sailors see little more than Sharugu's acidic tentacles before their ship is destroyed and their lives consumed.

There is a third kaiju who dwells upon Tsujoku, but of this one, few tales are told. Hotu-Bakete is the name of this shadowy kaiju, said to live in the heart of Mount Kijo under a lake of molten rock. Ancient texts tell of how Hotu-Bakete was spawned upon the world by an ancient demon-god in times long past, and that the demonic kaiju devastated entire nations before a powerful spirit of light banished it to Mount Kijo. The legends hold that Hotu-Bakete still sleeps deep in the core of the volcano. It is also said that both Sharugu and Gareshona exist to guard the prison of Hotu-Bakete, and they periodically join forces to keep the fiendish kaiju from fully awakening.

Kaiju

Kaiju are tremendous monsters that have a savage appetite for destruction and devastation. They dwell in distant and often inhospitable places, such as on volcanic islands, in the frozen polar regions, or at the bottom of the sea, where much of their time is spent in hibernation. Occasionally, a kaiju is awakened from its hibernation and begins wandering the land, often covering distances of hundreds of miles in the course of its journey.

Little can withstand the power and destructive force of an enraged kaiju, apart from another kaiju. They can destroy buildings in seconds, and entire cities can be destroyed if one is left unopposed. A kaiju's motives and reasons for rampaging are obscure; as magical creatures and personifications of elemental power they have no need to eat. They seem merely to be driven to destroy all in their path. One curious note that many have observed: When confronted by a kaiju from another plane, a group of kaiju will work together to defeat it. The natural result of one kaiju meeting another is a fight; entire provinces have been devastated by multiple kaiju battling each other. Yet when a Gargantuan sized or larger outsider with the Chaotic or Evil type modifier appears, kaiju set aside their normal aggression toward each other and attack the interloper. Kaiju possess an intense hatred of these (thankfully rare) creatures.

Finally, all kaiju are one of a kind. No two are exactly alike, and each one in your campaign should be individually crafted and given a unique personality and history. In appearance, they superficially resemble the creature they are modeled after, save that they are much more savage. Additional horns, dorsal spines, fins, bony ridges, spikes, and scales enhance their ferocious appearance.

Creating a Kaiju

"Kaiju" is a template that can be added to any animal, beast, magical beast, or vermin (referred to hereafter as the "base creature") of Tiny to Huge size. The base creature's type changes to "magical beast." Thus, vermin that become kaiju do not possess the standard vermin qualities. The kaiju uses the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted below.

Size: The creature's size becomes Colossal. Its Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, natural armor, size modifier, Armor Class size modifier, and damage dice all change according to the Size Increases table on page 12 of the *Monster Manual.* Note that changes are cumulative.

Hit Dice: The base creature's Hit Die type remains the same (remember, however, that creatures of the animal, beast, or vermin type become magical beasts and therefore use a d10), and it gains an additional 40 Hit Dice over and above the base creature's total.

Speed: Because of their immense size, kaiju are slow and ungainly; their speed does not change much from the base creature's. If the base creature has a speed less than 20 feet, it increases to 20 feet. Otherwise, the creature's speeds remain the same. Kaiju with the ability to fly are always Poor fliers.

AC: The template adds to the base natural armor bonus a creature has based on the Size Increases table on page 12 of the *Monster Manual.* Their increased size also gives the creature an armor class penalty. In addition to the changes that occur when increasing the creature's size, all kaiju are exceptionally well armored, and they gain an additional +15 to their natural armor bonus. Increasing the creature's size to Colossal also modifies the creature's Dexterity score, which in turn modifies the kaiju's final AC.

Totals for these changes are calculated below. Find the base creature's size on the chart, and add the bonus associated with it to the base creature's AC to discover the kaiju's final AC.

Base Creature's Size	Total AC Alterations
Tiny	+15
Small	+17
Medium	+19
Large	+19
Huge	+18

Attacks: A kaiju's base attack bonus is dictated by its type and Hit Dice. Because the kaiju template changes a creature's type to magical beast, they all progress as fighters. Thus, a kaiju has a base attack bonus equal to it's Hit Dice. Remember that the Colossal size of a kaiju causes it to suffer a -8 penalty to attacks, and the creature's altered Strength and Dexterity scores modify melee and ranged attacks respectively. Apart from this, the kaiju retains all of the attacks possessed by the base creature.

If the kaiju uses a weapon to attack, it has a maximum of four attacks when using the full-attack action. Feats, spells, and other effects can increase the number of attacks the creature receives, but the maximum it can derive from its base attack bonus is four attacks.

Damage: The base creature's damage dice are adjusted according to the change in the creature's size, as detailed on page 14 of the *Monster Manual* (repeated here).

Old Damage (Each)	New Damage
1d2	1d3
1d3	1d4
1d4	1d6
1d6	1d8
1d8 or 1d10	2d6
1d12	2d8

Note that changes are cumulative. For example, if the base creature's attack deals 2d6 damage and it increases three size categories when the kaiju template is applied, the attack now deals 4d8 damage. On the chart above, you can see that the first size increase changes each d6 (of the original 2d6 damage) into a d8. The second turns each of the two d8s into 2d6, making 4d6 total. The third increase turns each of the d6s into a d8, making the total 4d8.

Face/Reach: The face and reach of the base creature increase.

Use one of the following facing options as appropriate:

Colossal (tall)	40 ft. by 40 ft.
Colossal (long)	40 ft. by 80 ft.
Colossal (long and thin)	30 ft. by 120 ft.

It's possible for very large kaiju to have a larger facing. In

KAIJU CRAZY!

The kaiju template can be applied to creature types other than those mentioned, but note that when using a different creature type than those recommended, the base creature's type does not change. Saving throws and the base attack bonus must be figured using the base creature's advancement by type:

TYPE	ATTACK BONUS	GOOD SAVING THROWS
Aberration	As cleric	Will
Construct	As cleric	–
Dragon	As fighter	Fortitude, Reflex, Will
Elemental	As cleric	Reflex (air, fire); Fortitude (earth, water)
Fey	As wizard	Reflex and Will
Giant	As cleric	Fortitude
Humanoid	As cleric	Variable
Monstrous Humanoid	As fighter	Fortitude and Reflex
Ooze	As cleric	–
Outsider	As fighter	Fortitude, Reflex, Will
Plant	As cleric	Fortitude
Shapechanger	As cleric	Fortitude, Reflex, Will
Undead	As wizard	Will

If the base creature usually uses a weapon to attack, it should have a weapon as a kaiju. If not, it's generally going to be a lot weaker in combat than it should be according to its CR. If it does use a weapon, how did it aquire a weapon of such immense size? If the creature relies on a lot of special abilities to attack (like a beholder), it might be too tough for its CR according to this template. When using the kaiju template on the creature types listed above, you should take these things into account and adjust the CR.

If you feel up to the challenge, go for it and have fun! Here are some monsters that might make great kaiju: achaierai, assassin vine, arrowhawk, black pudding, ethereal marauder, gibbering mouther, grick, hydra, marilith, mimic, mummy, thoqqua, and vargouille.

such cases, you should use proportions similar to those listed above.

The reach of the kaiju is the same as the base creature plus a certain amount according to the base creature's reach:

Base Creature's Reach	Kaiju's Reach
0 ft.	20 ft.
5 ft.	+15 ft.
10 ft. or more	+10 ft.

Using these guidelines, a remorhaz kaiju would have a face/reach of 40 ft. by 80 ft./20 ft.

Special Attacks: A kaiju keeps any special attacks possessed by the base creature, but certain factors of special attacks are modified. The DC to resist or avoid special attacks is increased according to the creature's new Hit Dice and the relevant ability modifier as follows:

Ability or Energy Drain: The save DC is 10 + 1/2 the kaiju's Hit Dice + the kaiju's Charisma modifier.

Breath Weapon: The save DC is 10 + 1/2 the kaiju's Hit Dice + the kaiju's Constitution modifier.

Fear or Frightful Presence: The save DC is 10 + 1/2 the kaiju's Hit Dice + the kaiju's Charisma modifier.

Gaze: The save DC is 10 + 1/2 the kaiju's Hit Dice + the kaiju's Charisma modifier.

Poison: The save DC is 10 + 1/2 the kaiju's Hit Dice + the kaiju's Constitution modifier. Note that vermin no longer gain the vermin bonus to their poison saving throw DCs.

Spell-like: The save DC is 10 + the equivalent spell's level + the kaiju's Charisma modifier. Note that the caster level for the base creature's spell-like abilities remains the same. If the ability specifies that the creature uses its level as the caster level (such as in the half-celestial template) the kaiju is considered to be a 20th-level spellcaster.

In this case, "spell-like" does not necessarily refer to a special attack that is a spell-like ability; it refers to any special attack that does not fall under the other special attack categories and that can be equated to a spell regardless of what type of special attack it is.

The damage of a special attack does not increase with size; a tiny monstrous spider kaiju does only one point of Dexterity damage with its bite. Special attacks (except for spell-like abilities and other special attacks that mimic spells) that affect an area (including cones) are enlarged by the size category of the base creature:

Base Creature's Size	Area Multiplier
Tiny	x4
Small	x4
Medium	x3
Large	x3
Huge	x2

Certain special attacks, like improved grab, rely on a creature's size category to determine effects. In general, you should retain the same ratio. Thus, if a Large creature can use improved grab only on Small or smaller opponents, its kaiju version would be able to use improved grab only on Huge or smaller opponents.

All kaiju have the trample special attack:

Trample (Ex): As a standard action during its turn each round, the kaiju can run over an opponent of Gargantuan size or smaller. The kaiju has merely to move over the opponent.

The trample deals 4d12 damage. If the creature has more than two legs, add the kaiju's Strength modifier to this damage. If the creature is a biped, add half the kaiju's Strength bonus to this damage. If the creature has no legs (a snake for instance), do not add any of Strength modifier to this damage. If the base creature already has a trample attack, this special attack replaces it.

Trampled opponents can attempt attacks of opportunity, but these incur a -4 penalty. If they do not make attacks of opportunity, trampled opponents can attempt Reflex saves for half damage. The save DC is 10 + 1/2 the kaiju's Hit Dice + the kaiju's Strength modifier.

In addition to its standard special attacks, a kaiju gains one additional special attack plus one for every 3 Hit Dice above 40, chosen from the list below:

Augmented Criticals (Ex): Using its natural attacks, the kaiju threatens a critical on a natural attack roll of 18-20, dealing triple damage on a successful critical hit.

Battle Frenzy (Ex): When the kaiju is reduced to 25% of its maximum hit point total, it gains a +4 bonus to Strength and can make an additional melee attack with its primary natural attack each round at a -5 penalty. These benefits cease if the kaiju is healed above 25% of its maximum hit point total or is reduced to 0 hit points or less.

Breath Weapon (Su): The kaiju possesses a powerful breath weapon. It can use this breath weapon once every 1d4 rounds. The type of damage done by the breath weapon is the same as one of the energy resistances granted by the kaiju template (see Special Qualities). The breath weapon takes the form of a line (ten feet wide and ten feet tall) with a length of 100 feet, and does 10d6 points of damage. Creatures can make Reflex saving throws (DC 10 + 1/2 the kaiju's Hit Dice + the kaiju's Constitution modifier) for half damage.

Energized Attack (Su): As a standard action once per minute, the kaiju can infuse its natural attacks with energy of the type of one of the energy resistances granted by the kaiju template (see Special Qualities). The type must be chosen when the kaiju is created. This lasts for 1d4+1 rounds; during this time, all the kaiju's melee attacks do an extra 3d6 damage of the appropriate energy type. This damage is not multiplied on a successful critical.

Ranged Attack (Ex): The kaiju possesses some form of physical ranged attack; this might be the ability to fire spines from its torso, spit boulders from its mouth, shoot bony discs from its hands, or any other physical attack. The kaiju can make one ranged attack in this manner as a standard action using its raged attack bonus (base attack bonus + Dexterity modifier + size penalty).

Projectiles fired in this manner replenish their supply in one round, allowing the kaiju to make these ranged attacks at the rate of one per round. This attack has 200-foot range increment and causes 4d6 points of damage plus the kaiju's Strength modifier on a successful hit.

Ray Attack (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, the kaiju can generate a beam of energy from its mouth, eyes, horns, or some other body part. The kaiju must make a ranged touch attack to hit the target with its ray; all kaiju rays have a range of 300 feet. If the ray hits, it causes 15d6 points of energy damage of the same type as one of the energy resistances granted by the kaiju template (see Special Qualities).

Shockwave (Ex): As a standard action, the kaiju can rear up and come crashing to the earth. This causes a severe localized earth tremor, affecting all creatures standing on the ground within 100 feet of the kaiju. Creatures

KAIJU FEATS

Kaiju possess five additional feats over and above those possessed by the base creature. A kaiju prefers feats that enhance its melee abilities, but it can select any feat for which it qualifies. Common kaiju feats include Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, and Power Attack. Kaiju also have access to several unique feats as detailed below.

Battle Roar [Kaiju]

The kaiju's roar sounds especially fierce.

Prerequisite: Kaiju template.

Benefit: As a move equivalent action, the kaiju can unleash a battle roar. No two kaiju battle roars sound alike. A creature of 6 Hit Dice or less within 1,200 feet of the kaiju in the round that it roars becomes shaken and suffers a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws. Creatures of 7 or more Hit Dice must make a Will saving throw (DC 10 + half the kaiju's hit dice + the kaiju's Charisma modifier) to avoid the same effects.

Normal: While tremendously loud and unique to that particular kaiju, the monster's roar has no additional effects on those who can hear it. A kaiju roar, under normal circumstances, can be easily heard for miles around.

Special: Deafened creatures or creatures that cannot hear are immune to the effects of a kaiju roar. As Battle Roar is a supernatural ability, a bard can use her countersong ability to allow allies within 30 feet to use her perform check in place of the saving throw.

Improved Trample [Kaiju]

The kaiju is especially skilled at crushing buildings and foes underfoot.

Prerequisite: Kaiju template.

Benefit: If the kaiju tramples a creature, that creature does not gain an attack of opportunity against the kaiju. If the kaiju tramples a structure (building, ship, castle wall, and so on), its trample attack does double damage to it.

Normal: Trampling a creature provokes an attack of opportunity from that creature. Trampling a structure deals normal damage to the structures.

Penetrate Hardness

The kaiju's melee attacks can crush buildings and objects with ease.

Prerequisite: Kaiju template, Improved Critical.

Benefit: When the kaiju strikes an object using one of its melee attacks with the Improved Critical feat, the hardness of the object struck is halved for purposes of determining how much damage penetrates and applies.

Stunning Roar [Kaiju]

The kaiju's roar is particularly forceful and disorienting.

Prerequisite: Kaiju template, Battle Roar, Thunderous Roar.

Benefit: As a full round action, the kaiju can unleash a stunning roar. No two kaiju stunning roars sound alike. A stunning roar has the same effects as a thunderous roar and a battle roar. Additionally, the sheer force of a stunning roar forces all creatures of 7 or more Hit Dice within 1,200 feet of the kaiju to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + half the kaiju's hit dice + the kaiju's Charisma modifier) or become stunned for 1d4 rounds. Creatures of 6 or fewer Hit Dice are automatically stunned for 1d4 rounds.

Special: Deafened creatures or creatures that cannot hear are immune to the effects of a kaiju roar. As Stunning Roar is a supernatural ability, a bard can use her countersong ability to allow allies within 30 feet to use her perform check in place of the saving throw.

Thunderous Roar [Kaiju]

The kaiju's roar is unbelievably loud.

Prerequisite: Kaiju template, Battle Roar.

Benefit: As a standard action, the kaiju can unleash a thunderous roar. A thunderous roar has the same effects as a battle roar. Additionally, creatures of 7 or more Hit Dice within 1,200 feet must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + half the kaiju's hit dice + the kaiju's Charisma modifier) or be deafened for 3d6 rounds. Creatures of 6 Hit Dice or less are automatically deafened for 3d6 rounds.

Special: Deafened creatures or creatures that cannot hear are immune to the effects of a kaiju roar. As Thunderous Roar is a supernatural ability, a bard can use her countersong ability to allow allies within 30 feet to use her perform check in place of the saving throw.

in this region must make Reflex saving throws (DC 10 + half the kaiju's Hit Dice + Strength modifier) or fall prone. Structures in this area suffer 4d6 points of damage.

Spell-Like Ability (Sp): The kaiju can use one of the following spells as a spell-like ability: *blur* 5/day, *call lightning* 3/day, *control weather* 1/day, *cloudkill* 3/day, *darkness* 5/day, *dimension door* 3/day, *earthquake* 1/day, *fireball* 3/day, *fly* 3/day, *gaseous form* 3/day, *haste* 1/day, *ice storm* 3/day, *invisibility* 3/day, *minute form** 3/day, *vulnerability** 3/day, *whirlwind* 1/day.

*This spell is detailed in *Oriental Adventures.*

These spell-like abilities function as if cast by a 20th-level sorcerer. The DC to resist these spell-like abilities is 10 + spell level + the kaiju's Charisma modifier. This ability can be taken more than once, allowing a kaiju to have several different spell-like abilities.

Swallow Whole (Ex): The kaiju can try to swallow an opponent of Huge or smaller size by making a successful grapple check. Once swallowed, the opponent takes crushing damage equal to 2d8 + the kaiju's Strength bonus, plus 3d6 points of acid damage from the kaiju's digestive juices per round. A swallowed creature can cut its way out using claws or a light weapon by dealing 50 points of damage to the kaiju's digestive tract (AC 20). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed creature must cut its own way out. If the base creature already has a swallow whole attack, the description of this ability replaces it.

Windstorm (Ex): As a standard action, the kaiju can blast an area with powerful gusts of wind by flapping its wings. This blast of wind creates a 100-foot-long cone of hurricane force wind. All flames in this region are extinguished. Ranged attacks are impossible to make while the windstorm is in effect (except for siege weapons or kaiju ranged attacks, which suffer a -8 penalty to attack). Listen checks are impossible. Creatures of Medium-size or smaller on the ground are knocked prone and roll 1d4x10 feet, sustaining 1d4 points of subdual damage per 10 feet. Flying creatures of Medium-size or smaller are blown back 2d6x10 feet and sustain 2d6 points of subdual damage. Creatures of Large size on the ground must make the same saving throw or be knocked prone. Flying creatures of Large size are blown back 1d6x10 feet. Flying creatures of Huge size are blown back 1d6x5 feet. The kaiju must have wings to have this special attack.

Special Qualities: A kaiju keeps any special qualities possessed by the base creature. Special qualities that affect an area are enlarged in the same manner as a kaiju's special attacks. In addition, a kaiju gains all of the following special qualities:

Damage Reduction (Ex): Kaiju possess damage

reduction 25/+5. If the base creature already has damage reduction, this special quality replaces it.

Darkvision (Ex): Kaiju possess darkvision to a range of 120 feet.

Energy Resistance (Ex): Kaiju are highly resistant to one form of energy (acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic) and possess energy resistance 50 against this element. If the base creature already has energy resistance of the type chosen, use the better value.

Immune to Mind-Influencing Effects (Ex): Kaiju are immune to mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects). Certain powerful artifacts might be able to control kaiju, but for the most part such powerful magic is beyond the ken of mortals.

Spell Resistance (Su): The kaiju gains spell resistance equal to 10 + its CR. If the base creature already has spell resistance, this special quality replaces it.

In addition to these standard kaiju special qualities, a kaiju gains one additional special quality plus one for every 3 Hit Dice above 40, chosen from the list below:

Absorb Energy (Su): The kaiju can absorb energy attacks (of the same energy type as one of the energy resistances granted by the kaiju template) that strike it. Any damage from this energy type that penetrates the kaiju's energy resistance is absorbed and converted into temporary hit points that last for ten minutes before vanishing.

Additional Energy Resistance (Ex): The kaiju possesses energy resistance 50 to two additional forms of energy (acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic). this ability can be chosen twice, granting the kaiju resistance to all five types of energy.

Additional Movement Type (Ex): The kaiju gains a land, climb, fly, swim, or burrow speed. New fly and swim speeds granted by this special quality are equal to the kaiju's base speed, and the kaiju's new burrow or climb speed is always half the kaiju's base speed. (If the creature does not have a land speed, it cannot burrow.) If the base creature did not possess a land speed, the kaiju can gain a land speed of 20 feet. The kaiju's body cosmetically changes to aid in its new movement mode; it gains wings, flippers, stubby legs, or burrowing claws. This ability can be chosen multiple times, granting the kaiju a new form of movement each time.

Death Throes (Su): When killed, the kaiju explodes in a burst of energy (of the same energy type as one of the energy resistances granted by the kaiju template) that deals 20d6 points of damage to everything within 100 feet. Creatures in this region must make Reflex saving throws (DC 10 + half the kaiju's Hit Dice + Constitution modifier) to take half damage.

Fast Healing (Ex): The kaiju heals wounds very quickly and has fast healing 20.

Immunity (Ex): The kaiju gains complete immunity to one of the following: acid, cold, electricity, fire, sonic attacks, or disease and poison. This ability can be chosen multiple times.

No Breath (Ex): The kaiju does not breathe and is immune to gas-based attacks that require a Fortitude saving throw. It can also exist buried in the earth, underwater, or in other airless environments with ease.

Reflect Spells (Su): Targeted spells and spell-like effects that fail to penetrate the kaiju's spell resistance are reflected back upon their caster.

See Invisibility (Su): The kaiju can continuously *see invisibility* as the spell cast by a 20th-level sorcerer. It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

Saves: A kaiju's base saving throws are determined by its Hit Dice and creature type. Because all kaiju become magical beasts, Fortitude and Reflex are their good saves. Saving throws progress in the normal fashion.

Hit Dice	Fort.	Ref.	Will
40	+22	+22	+13
41	+22	+22	+13
42	+23	+23	+14
43	+23	+23	+14
44	+24	+24	+14
45	+24	+24	+15
46	+25	+25	+15
47	+25	+25	+15
48	+26	+26	+16
49	+26	+26	+16
50	+27	+27	+16

The kaiju's Constitution, Dexterity, and Wisdom scores and feats can further adjust these bonuses.

Abilities: A kaiju's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution are all adjusted according to the size increase as detailed on page 12 of the *Monster Manual*. Kaiju are especially strong and hale and receive an additional +4 bonus to Strength and Constitution. Kaiju are little more intelligent than animals. Thus, the kaiju's Intelligence score becomes a 2. Kaiju are impossible to ignore and have a powerful sense of presence; they gain a +20 bonus to Charisma. A kaiju's Wisdom remains the same as the base creature's.

These changes are totaled in the chart below. Find the base creature's size on the chart and add the bonus or penalty associated with it to the base creature's ability score to discover the kaiju's final ability score.

Size	Str	Dex	Con	Int*	Wis	Cha
Tiny	+44	-8	+22	2	+0	+20
Small	+40	-6	+22	2	+0	+20
Medium	+36	-4	+20	2	+0	+20
Large	+28	-2	+16	2	+0	+20
Huge	+20	+0	+12	2	+0	+20

*The kaiju's Intelligence becomes 2.

Skills: A kaiju possesses 1 skill point per Hit Die. Skills possessed by the base creature are class skills, all others are cross-class skills. Keep in mind that the kaiju's size, ability score bonuses, feats, and movement types can alter the skill bonuses. A kaiju also retains the base creature's racial bonuses to skills.

Feats: A kaiju retains any of the bonus feats possessed by the base creature and has an additional feat plus one per every 4 Hit Dice above 32. Thus, a sea lion kaiju (46 Hit Dice) would have a total of four feats.

These feats can be chosen from any that the kaiju qualifies for. There are also five new feats available only to kaiju (see the Kaiju Feats sidebar).

Climate/Terrain: Any or same as base creature
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: +15
Treasure: None
Alignment: Same as base creature
Advancement: –

Sample Kaiju

Three sample kaiju are presented here. These kaiju all dwell on Tsujoku Island and are presented as an example of how different kaiju interact with each other and their environment.

Sharugu, Kaiju Giant Octopus

Colossal Magical Beast (Aquatic)
Hit Dice: 48d10+432 (696 hp)
Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

FINE

Speed: 20 ft., swim 30 ft.
AC: 37 (-8 size, +1 Dex, +34 natural)
Attacks: 8 tentacle rakes +59 melee, bite +57 melee
Damage: Tentacle rake 2d6+19, bite 4d6+9
Face/Reach: 40 ft. by 40 ft./20 ft.
Special Attacks: Trample, improved grab, constrict, augmented criticals, energized attack (acid), *control weather*
Special Qualities: Damage reduction 25/+5, darkvision 120 ft., resistances, fast healing 20, fire immunity, immune to mind-influencing effects, ink cloud, jet, SR 33
Saves: Fort +35, Ref +27, Will +17
Abilities: Str 48, Dex 13, Con 29, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 23
Skills: Hide +5, Listen +17, Spot +17
Feats: Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Trample, Multiattack, Power Attack

Climate/Terrain: Temperate and warm aquatic
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 23
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement Range: —

Sharugu doesn't dwell on Tsujoku Island, but it often slithers up from its nearby ocean lair to assault the denizens of the island. These forays into the heart of the island often arouse the anger of Gareshona and cause no end of terror to the smaller inhabitants of the island. Sharugu looks like a massive octopus covered with thick armor plates and large bony ridges. Its colors change constantly to mimic the surrounding environment. Sharugu can even change the shape of the spines and ridges on its body to resemble rock outcroppings or vegetation, granting the kaiju surprisingly effective camouflage despite its size.

Combat

Sharugu prefers to begin combats with kaiju by energizing its tentacles with acid. Against non-kaiju, it prefers to control the weather to sink ships and otherwise harm its foes before engaging in combat.

Trample (Ex): As a standard action during its turn each round, Sharugu can run over an opponent of Gargantuan size or smaller. Sharugu merely has to move over the opponent.

The trample deals 4d12+19 damage. If Sharugu tramples a creature, that creature does not gain an attack of opportunity against the kaiju. If Sharugu tramples a structure (building, ship, castle wall, and so on), its trample attack does double damage to it. Trampled opponents can attempt Reflex saves (DC 53) for half damage.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Sharugu must hit a Gargantuan-size or smaller creature with a tentacle rake attack. If it gets a hold, it can constrict.

Constrict (Ex): Sharugu deals 4d8+19 points of damage with a successful grapple check against Gargantuan or smaller creatures.

Augmented Criticals (Ex): Using its natural attacks, the kaiju threatens a critical on a natural attack roll of 18-20, dealing triple damage on a successful critical hit.

Energized Attack (Su): As a standard action once per minute, Sharugu can energize its tentacles and bite attack with acid for 1d4+1 rounds. During this

time, Sharugu's natural attacks cause an extra 3d6 points of acid damage.

Control Weather (Sp): Sharugu can cast *control weather* once per day as a 20th level sorcerer.

Immune to Mind-Influencing Effects (Ex): Kaiju are immune to mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).

Resistances (Ex): The kaiju has acid, cold, and electricity resistance 50.

Ink Cloud (Ex): Sharugu can emit a cloud of jet-black ink 30 feet high by 30 feet wide by 30 feet long once per minute as a free action. This cloud provides total concealment, which Sharugu sometimes uses to escape a losing fight. Creatures in the cloud suffer the effects of total darkness.

Jet (Ex): Sharugu can jet backward once per round as a double move action, at a speed of 200 feet.

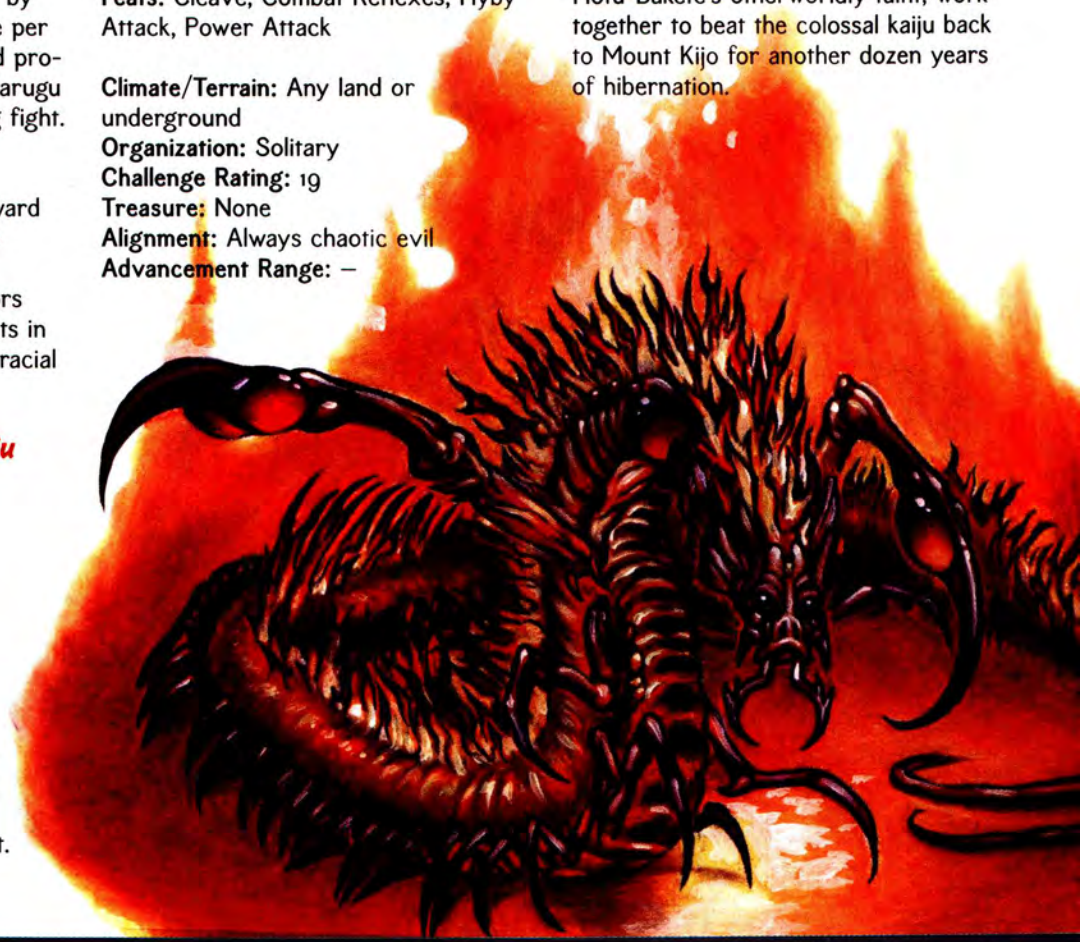
Skills: Sharugu can change colors and roughly mimic rocks and plants in the environment, granting it a +4 racial bonus to hide checks.

Hotu-Bakete, Half-Fiend Kaiju Monstrous Huge Centipede (Chaotic, Evil)

Colossal Outsider
Hit Dice: 44d10+308 (550 hp)
Initiative: +4 (+4 Dex)
Speed: 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (poor)
AC: 35 (-6 size, +4 Dex, +31 natural armor)
Attacks: Bite +51 melee, 2 claws +46 melee; or spines +48 ranged
Damage: Bite 4d6+15 and poison, Claw 2d8+7; or spines 4d6+15
Face/Reach: 30 ft. by 120 ft./20 ft.
Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, poison, trample, breath weapon, spines
Special Qualities: Damage reduction 25/+5, Darkvision 120 ft., resistances, immune to poison, immune to mind-influencing effects, absorb energy—fire, reflect spells, SR 29
Saves: Fort +31, Ref +28, Will +14
Abilities: Str 41, Dex 19, Con 24, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 24
Skills: Climb +29, Concentration +30, Hide +39, Intimidate +30, Listen +23, Spot +51
Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Power Attack

Climate/Terrain: Any land or underground
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 19
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement Range: —

Hotu-Bakete dwells deep in the bubbling lake of magma in the cauldron of Mount Kijo on Tsujoku Island, where it spends most of eternity in a deep slumber. This monstrous kaiju is rumored to be the offspring of a long-forgotten deity from some dark realm. Today, Hotu-Bakete remains in hibernation unless its sleep is disturbed, at which time it rises from the volcano to kill any creatures it can find. These occasional periods of activity are ended when Gareshona and Sharugu, enraged by Hotu-Bakete's otherworldly taint, work together to beat the colossal kaiju back to Mount Kijo for another dozen years of hibernation.



Hotu-Bakete looks like a huge fiery orange centipede. A triple row of spines that look almost like solidified fire runs down its back, and its front two legs end in huge talons.

Combat

Hotu-Bakete prefers to use its spell-like abilities and breath weapon from a distance when fighting kaiju. Against smaller opponents, the monster has no qualms about engaging in melee; it seems to take an insane delight in crushing things under its many feet.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): 3/day—*darkness, poison, unholy aura;* 1/day—*blasphemy, contagion, desecrate, destruction, horrid wilting, summon monster IX* (fiends only), *unhallow, unholy blight.* These abilities are as the spells cast by a 20th-level cleric.

Poison (Ex): Bite, Fortitude save (DC 29), initial and secondary damage 1d6 temporary Dexterity.

Trample (Ex): As a standard action during its turn each round, the kaiju can run over an opponent of Gargantuan size or smaller. The kaiju has merely to move over the opponent.

The trample deals 4d12+15 points of damage. Trampled opponents can attempt attacks of opportunity, but these incur a -4 penalty. If they do not make attacks of opportunity, trampled opponents can attempt Reflex saves (DC 47) for half damage.

Breath Weapon (Su): As a standard action once every 1d4 rounds, Hotu-Bakete can breath a 100-foot line of fire (ten feet wide and ten feet tall), dealing 20d6

points of fire damage. Creatures can make Reflex saving throws (DC 39) for half damage.

Resistances (Ex): The kaiju has fire resistance 50 and acid, cold, and electricity resistance 20.

Absorb Energy—Fire (Su): Hotu-Bakete absorbs fire damage that penetrates its energy resistance and converts it into temporary hit points that last for ten minutes before vanishing.

Spines (Ex): Hotu-Bakete can fire spines from its back once per round as a standard action. This attack has a 200-foot range increment.

Reflect Spells (Su): Targeted spells and spell-like effects that fail to penetrate Hotu-Bakete's spell resistance are reflected back upon their caster.

Immune to Mind-Influencing Effects (Ex): Kaiju are immune to mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).

Gareshona, Kaiju Bulette

Colossal Magical Beast
Hit Dice: 49d10+539 (808 hp)
Initiative: +2 (Dex)
Speed: 40 ft., burrow 20 ft.
AC: 40 (-8 size, +2 Dex, +36 natural armor)
Attacks: Bite +59 melee, 2 claws +57 melee
Damage: Bite 4d8+18, claw 4d6+9
Face/Reach: 40 ft. by 80 ft./20 ft.
Special Attacks: Leap, trample, shockwave, ray attack (electricity), spell-like abilities
Special Qualities: Scent, tremorsense, damage reduction 25/+5, darkvision 120 ft., resistances, death throes, fast healing 20, immune to mind-influencing effects, see invisibility, SR 38
Saves: Fort +35, Ref +28, Will +17
Abilities: Str 47, Dex 15, Con 32, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 26
Skills: Jump +38, Listen +29
Feats: Battle Roar, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Thunderous Roar, Staggering Roar

Climate/Terrain: Warm or temperate land and underground
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 28
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement Range: —

Gareshona dwells in the mountain highlands of Tsujoku Island but periodically wanders down into the jungle lowlands to explore or to investigate the intrusions of people foreign to the island. Gareshona is fiercely territorial and views the entire island of Tsujoku as its own. Gareshona seeks out and challenges active kaiju on the island. Its battles with Sharugu are legendary; the two kaiju clash quite often and several regions of Tsujoku Island bear permanent scars from these clashes. Gareshona's intense territorial instincts are matched only by its hatred of Hotu-Bakete, whose lair Gareshona guards and observes. Those who would try to awaken Hotu-Bakete must first deal with Gareshona.

Curiously, Gareshona seems to bear no ill will to the natives of Tsujoku Island and has even come to their aid on numerous occasions. This kaiju looks superficially like a monstrous bulette, but its armor plating looks much more like solid metal than anything organic. Ridges of spines and jagged knife-like blades run down its back and protrude from its leg joints, and its jaws are filled with three rows of huge, razor sharp teeth.

Combat

Gareshona revels in melee combat and gleefully charges into battle with any kaiju it encounters, starting the battle by using its roar feats liberally. It has little interest in creatures of Large size or smaller; if such incidental beings deign to attack the kaiju, it often ignores the assault. However, if it is forced to deal with such creatures, it leaves nothing to chance.

Leap (Ex): Gareshona can jump into the air during combat. This allows it to make four claw attacks instead of two, but it cannot bite. The attack bonus for each claw attack is +59.

Trample (Ex): As a standard action during its turn each round, Gareshona can run over an opponent of Gargantuan size or smaller. The kaiju merely has to move over the opponent.

The trample deals 4d12+18 points of damage. Trampled opponents can attempt attacks of opportunity, but these incur a -4 penalty. If they do not make attacks of opportunity, trampled opponents can attempt Reflex saves (DC 52) for half damage.

Shockwave (Ex): As a standard action, Gareshona can rear up and come crashing to the earth. This causes a severe localized earth tremor, affecting all creatures standing on the ground within 100 feet of the kaiju. Creatures in this region must make Reflex saving throws (DC 52) or fall prone. Structures in this area suffer 4d6 points of damage.

Ray Attack (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Gareshona can generate a beam of electricity to attack a foe. The kaiju must make a ranged touch attack to hit the target with its ray. The ray has a range of 300 feet. If the ray hits, it causes 15d6 points of electricity damage.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): 1/day—*earthquake, haste*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 20th-level sorcerer.

Resistances (Ex): The kaiju has acid, electricity, and fire resistance 50.

Tremorsense (Ex): Gareshona can automatically sense the location of anything within 120 feet that is in contact with the ground.

No Breath (Ex): The kaiju does not breathe and is immune to gas-based attacks that require a Fortitude saving throw. It can also exist buried in the earth, underwater, or in other airless environments with ease.

See Invisibility (Su): The kaiju can continuously *see invisibility* as the spell cast by a 20th-level sorcerer. It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

Death Throes (Su): When killed, the kaiju explodes in a burst of energy that deals 20d6 points of electricity damage to everything within 100 feet. Creatures in this region must make Reflex saving throws (DC 45) to take half damage.

KAIJU in Your Campaign

You can place Tsujoku Island anywhere in your campaign world; the isolated nature of the island is a perfect excuse to explain why it doesn't appear on most maps. Tsujoku Island is a fairly large region, and it is quite possible that other kaiju dwell on it or in the waters surrounding it. Of course, you are not limited to Tsujoku Island or the three sample kaiju detailed here. Kaiju can dwell in any remote region.

Nevertheless, creatures as large and powerful as the kaiju cannot simply exist in a campaign world as "one more monster;" these beasts spawn entire myth-cycles of their own and should never appear on wandering monster charts or as the opponents in minor encounters. They are powerful magical creatures that can shape the growth of nations.

Of course, the main difficulty with introducing Kaiju into an ongoing campaign is the simple fact that they are far too powerful for most adventuring parties to battle and hope to survive. Despite this, kaiju can add an interesting wrinkle to games at all power levels.

Kaiju as Deities: Despite their destructive nature, humanoids often live in close proximity to active kaiju. These societies are by necessity primitive or nomadic, since a kaiju can level a city accidentally by merely passing too closely in its wanderings. Humanoids in these societies view the kaiju as deities and worship them fervently, believing the kaiju protect them from harm.

In this situation, the party need not even see the kaiju. The creature would be present in the form of idols and statues found in an ancient ruined city or nomadic tribe's village. Player characters could even be of the faithful themselves. Worshiping kaiju does not grant divine spells, but there are many barbarians, fighters, monks, rangers, rogues, sorcerers, and wu-jen who venerate the near-limitless power possessed by the kaiju. Even some shamans offer prayer to the kaiju, although they devote the bulk of their worship to the realm of spirits.

The PCs aren't expected to confront the kaiju for most of the campaign. Instead, it acts as a plot device and campaign shaper until the day the PCs are high enough level to become involved.

Kaiju as Natural Disasters: Kaiju sometimes wander the land for no apparent reason other than to sow destruction on civilization. In this case, a rampaging kaiju can be treated similarly to a volcano, earthquake, hurricane, or other natural disaster. Often, the only recourse against the arrival of a kaiju is flight. Just as the tension of an adventure can be heightened by setting it in the middle of a terrific storm, you can heighten the tension of an adventure by having it take place in the same city a kaiju is currently rampaging through. The party wouldn't have to directly encounter the beast, but they would have to contend with collapsing buildings, panicked mobs, and other secondary results of the kaiju attack.

Kaiju as Tools: Although kaiju are immune to most forms of mind control, legends hold that they can still be dominated or otherwise controlled by powerful artifacts or deities. Someone who manages to gain magical control over a kaiju with such a potent artifact has a terrible weapon at his disposal. Evil spellcasters might use a dominated kaiju as a threat to extort money from powerful nobles, or they might use their behemoths to extract vengeance against the citizens of a city they had been slighted by. In such a case, a rampaging kaiju could be stopped by killing the evil mastermind who controls its actions.

Alternately, the party can be tasked with destroying a particularly well-defended castle or fortress, or they might be looking for a way to defend a small army from annihilation at the hands of a much larger force. In such a case, the players might have to find a way to awaken and then control a kaiju long enough to destroy the castle or invading army.

Kaiju as Opponents: Eventually, your players' characters can rise in power to a point where they could conceivably meet a kaiju head on in battle. A kaiju can provide a terrific challenge for high-level parties, and run properly, a battle with a kaiju can serve as a wonderful final confrontation to a campaign.

Additionally, the *Epic Level Handbook* will be released next year. This book takes characters beyond 20th level and provides all the rules and information you need to play in super high-level campaigns. The kaiju template gives you hundreds of new options for high-level monsters, so you won't be in short supply.

PLAYFUL PHOENIX FIST

A Random Name Generator for Martial Arts Moves

by Patrick T. Younts with Matthew Sernett • illustrated by D. Alexander Gregory

DM: *Okay Sarah. The Temple of Four Winds is burning. Beyond the shattered gates, Ember's master is sprawled on the floor. To get to him she'll have to cross the bridge, which is wreathed in flames and looks very unstable.*

Sarah: *Ember rushes across the bridge without hesitation. "Master, I'm coming to save you!"*

DM: *The heat is almost unbearable and smoke obscures your vision as you reach the middle of the bridge. Suddenly a figure leaps from the heart of the flames, staggering you with a hidden phoenix kick!*

Sarah: *Ember drops into a fighting stance. "Who attacked me?"*

DM: *"It's Tyron." He smiles, points a finger at you, then draws it slowly across his neck. His hands are splattered with blood.*

Sarah: *"Traitor!" Ember springs at Tyron, throwing two punches and a . . . headbutt? "Tyron, I will avenge my master and restore honor to the Temple of Four Winds!"*

DM: *"Honor means nothing. Only victory matters." Tyron strikes you three times with hidden butterfly circles the sun for 19 damage. "My northern devil boxing is unstoppable."*

Sarah: *Um . . . Ember uses flurry of blows. "I . . . I can still beat you."*

Enter the Article

Bizarre costumes, ancient temples, handsome heroes and pretty girls, lost tomes holding the secret to incredible martial arts power, unbeatable warriors soaring fifty feet through the air spouting outrageous names for outlandish fighting techniques; gamers are suckers for that stuff.

The kung-fu movies of the 1970s hold a special place in the hearts of many roleplayers. With the inclusion of the monk in the new edition, many gamers strive to bring the sensibilities of real- and *reel*-life kung fu to their adventures. One of the best ways to do this is by using the same kind of outrageous names for your character's martial arts style and techniques that are used in the movies. But when the dice and the fists start flying, inventing even one cool technique name on the fly is tough, let alone four or five at a time. For DMs running multiple NPC monks, it's almost impossible. So what can you do?

Names of Legend

Historically, there have been hundreds of documented kung-fu styles, plus unknown thousands of private family styles and fictional systems existing only in film. Styles were created around an animal (white crane boxing), an element (water boxing), or a location (shaolin chuan translates as young forest fist). PCs and NPCs should promote their styles whenever possible. A style's strong reputation is of critical importance. A master of a well-regarded system commands respect in the community and high training fees from students. The downside of this fame is that fighters looking to build a reputation frequently come to challenge the master. Rivalries between masters of kung-fu are the most common stories in Hong Kong cinema, and they can be used to great effect in your campaign.

To generate your own martial arts style or technique names, use the tables provided in this article. There are several ways to use these tables in your campaigns. The simplest method is to randomly determine technique names each round, ideally rolled before your turn to speed play. The second is to roll before the session begins, generating several techniques and choosing among them during play. Finally, players can roll twenty techniques when creating characters, adding ten more each time they gain a level, representing the character's growing mastery of martial arts.

Example: Rolling on the Dice of Fury table, Sarah gets the result of **(Number) (Placement) (Noun)s' (Fighting)**. For a number she gets the result of "seven." Then she rolls on the Placement table and gets the word "above." Sarah prefers the alliteration of the word "southern" and chooses that instead. It seems to make more sense in the phrase anyway. She then rolls on the Noun chart and learns she needs to roll on Table N. This gives her the word "moon." Sarah then rolls to determine the last word of her martial arts move's name. She comes up with the word "thrust." The resulting name is "seven southern moons' thrust," a great phrase to shout in a kung-fu combat.

FOUR SCHOLARS BOXING

USEFUL CHINESE TERMS

Mook Jong (Wooden Man): This is a thick, wooden pole of roughly man-height, with three or more "arms" jutting out at various angles. A training tool common to many Chinese styles, practitioners use full power techniques against the wooden man, building coordination and toughness.

External and Internal Styles: Also known as hard or soft styles, most martial arts are lumped into one of these broad categories. External styles concentrate on the development of muscular power while internal styles develop the body's internal energies for use in combat. Most martial arts are a mix of external and internal styles.

Qi Gong: These are a category of exercises that use the qi (also known as chi and ki) to promote health and develop the body. Hard qi gong, which are often brutally difficult physical exercises combined with specific breathing patterns, are a common element of Chinese martial arts. Iron palm training, in which a practitioner repeatedly strikes sand, stone, or metal daily with his hands, is an example of hard qi gong.

Push Hands: This is a two-person training exercise that develops balance and awareness in combat. Participants press their palms against each other's arms and attempt to pull or push their partner off balance, using body positioning and timing rather than brute force. Another similar technique is known as "sticky hands training."

Fa Jing (Emitting Energy): Fa jing uses internal power combined with perfect body alignment to deliver incredibly powerful blows with only minor physical effort. Internal styles, like tai chi chuan, rely heavily on fa jing.

Lei Tei (Platform Fighting): When masters fought, they often used a lei tei platform, a small stage raised several feet off the ground. Fighters would attempt to drive each other off the platform by any means necessary. The first one off the platform was the loser, in more ways than one, as the hard ground and punishing blows claimed many lives.

Centerline: Running from between the eyes in a straight line down to the groin, the centerline is an area of vital importance to the martial artist. Many of the body's most vulnerable points are connected by the centerline, including the adams apple, clavicle, sternum, dan tien, and groin.

Dan Tien: The dan tien is the center of breath, the gathering point of qi energy in the body. It is located midway between the belly button and the groin.

Sarah: *Ember drops into a turtle over the mountain crouch. "Who attacked me?"*

DM: *"It's Tyron." He smiles, points a finger at you, then draws it slowly across his neck. His hands are splattered with blood.*

Sarah: *"Traitor!" Ember springs at Tyron, using her fists fall like trees attack. "Tyron, I will avenge my master and restore honor to the Temple of Four Winds!"*

DM: *"Honor means nothing. Only victory matters." Tyron strikes you three times with hidden butterfly circles the sun for 19 damage. "My northern devil boxing is unstoppable."*

Sarah: *Ember takes the jade emperor among the peasants stance and says, "Your confidence is your weakness."*

DICE of FURY

Roll 1d2 to determine the column used, then roll 1d20 to determine the format of the technique's name. Once you have the format of the name, roll on the charts indicated. Alternatively, you can pick words from the appropriate charts that alliterate. You might need to change the form of a word slightly to have it make sense in the context of the format.

1

1	(Adjective) (Fighting)
2	(Adjective) (Noun)'s (Adjective) (Fighting)
3	(Adjective) (Noun) (Fighting)
4	(Adjective) (Noun)'s (Number) (Noun)s (Fighting)
5	(Adjective) (Noun) (Placement) (Adjective) (Noun)s
6	(Adjective) (Noun) of (Verb)ing (Noun)
7	(Adjective) (Noun) of the (Verb)ing (Noun) (Fighting)
8	(Adjective) (Noun) (Verb)s with (Adjective) (Noun)
9	(Fighting) of (Adjective) (Noun)
10	(Fighting) of the (Verb)ing (Noun)
11	(Noun) (Fighting) (Placement) the (Noun)
12	(Noun) of the (Verb)ing (Noun)
13	(Noun) (Placement) (Verb)ing (Noun)
14	(Noun) (Fighting)
15	(Noun) (Placement) (Adjective) (Noun)
16	(Noun) (Placement) the (Noun)
17	(Noun) (Verb)s with (Noun)
18	The (Noun) (Verb)s when (Number) (Noun)s (Verb)
19	(Number) (Adjective) (Noun)s' (Fighting)
20	(Number) (Placement) (Noun)s' (Fighting)

2

1	(Number) (Noun)s (Fighting)
2	(Number) (Noun)s' (Fighting)s
3	(Number) (Verb) (Noun)s (Fighting)
4	(Number) (Verb)ing (Noun)s (Verb) (Placement) (Adjective) (Noun)
5	(Placement) (Noun) (Fighting)
6	(Placement) (Noun)s, (Noun)s (Verb)
7	(Placement) (Noun)s (Verb) (Number) (Noun)s
8	(Placement) the (Noun), the (Noun) (Verb)s
9	(Placement) the (Placement) (Noun)s, (Noun) (Verb)s
10	(Verb)ing (Adjective) (Noun) (Fighting)
11	(Verb)ing (Adjective) (Noun)'s (Fighting)
12	(Verb)ing like (Noun)s
13	(Verb)ing (Noun), (Adjective) (Noun)
14	(Verb)ing (Noun) (Fighting)
15	(Verb)ing (Noun)'s (Adjective) (Fighting)
16	(Verb)ing (Noun) (Placement) (Adjective) (Noun)
17	(Verb)ing (Noun) (Verb)s (Placement) (Noun)
18	(Verb)ing (Noun) with a (Adjective) (Noun)
19	(Verb)ing (Placement) (Noun)
20	(Verb)s like (Adjective) (Noun)

FIGHTING

1	Table A
2	Table D

ADJECTIVE

1	Table E
2	Table G
3	Table H
4	Table I
5	Table J
6	Table M

PLACEMENT

1	above	12	near
2	among	13	north of/ northern
3	around	14	on
4	before	15	outside
5	behind	16	over
6	below	17	south of/ southern
7	beside	18	under
8	between	19	west of/ western
9	beyond	20	within
10	east of/ eastern		
11	far		

NOUN

1	Table B
2	Table C
3	Table F
4	Table G
5	Table J
6	Table K
7	Table L
8	Table N

NUMBER

1	two	1	fourteen	1	twenty-seven	1	sixty-six
2	three	2	fifteen	2	thirty	2	seventy-four
3	four	3	sixteen	3	thirty-seven	3	eighty-seven
4	five	4	seventeen	4	thirty-eight	4	ninety-nine
5	six	5	eighteen	5	forty	5	one hundred
6	seven	6	nineteen	6	forty-four	6	two hundred
7	eight	7	twenty	7	forty-nine	7	one thousand
8	nine	8	twenty-one	8	fifty	8	two thousand
9	ten	9	twenty-two	9	fifty-one	9	ten thousand
10	eleven	10	twenty-three	10	fifty-seven	10	one million
11	twelve	11	twenty-four	11	sixty	11	two million
12	thirteen	12	twenty-five	12	sixty-four	12	ten million

VERB (Modify result as necessary.)

1	battle	21	cry	41	hang	61	reign	81	stalk
2	beg	22	cross	42	hide	62	roll	82	stall
3	bend	23	curse	43	hold	63	remove	83	stand
4	bite	24	cut	44	howl	64	run	84	steal
5	bless	25	dance	45	intercept	65	scatter	85	stop
6	bloom	26	devour	46	jump	66	scream	86	strike
7	block	27	dive	47	kick	67	sculpt	87	stumble
8	bow	28	dodge	48	lash	68	seize	88	swim
9	burst	29	drain	49	leap	69	sell	89	swoop
10	break	30	drop	50	kill	70	shield	90	taunt
12	breathe	31	drink	51	meditate	71	shout	91	tear
12	catch	32	duck	52	murder	72	slay	92	throw
13	climb	33	fall	53	mine	73	sleep	93	torment
14	chase	34	fight	54	paint	74	slice	94	trick
15	circle	35	fly	55	pinch	75	smash	95	turn
16	coil	36	freeze	56	pounce	76	soar	96	twist
17	count	37	go	57	press	77	splash	97	win
18	crash	38	goad	58	protect	78	surmount	98	wrap
19	crouch	39	grasp	59	punch	79	surpass	99	write
20	crunch	40	hack	60	race	80	stab	100	writhe

DEFENSES

1 armor
2 block
3 crouch
4 defense
5 denial
6 dodge
7 form
8 flip
9 guard
10 leap
11 power
12 posture
13 protection
14 roll
15 shield
16 stance
17 style
18 technique
19 transformation
20 vest

WEAPONS

1 arrow
2 axe
3 club
4 dagger
5 dart
6 flail
7 gauntlet
8 hammer
9 knife
10 lance
11 lasso
12 mace
13 net
14 nunchaku
15 shuriken
16 spear
17 staff
18 sword
19 trident
20 whip

MONSTERS

1 angel
2 demon
3 devil
4 dragon
5 foo dog
6 foo lion
7 ghost
8 giant
9 goblin
10 hag
11 hydra
12 kappa
13 kraken
14 naga
15 phoenix
16 spirit
17 tengu
18 unicorn
19 vampire
20 yeti

ATTACKS

1 assault
2 attack
3 boxing
4 chop
5 explosion
6 hit
7 jab
8 kick
9 knee
10 lunge
11 pugilism
12 punch
13 rake
14 slam
15 strike
16 swat
17 sweep
18 throw
19 thrust
20 trip

MISC. MATERIALS

1 bamboo
2 blood
3 bone
4 clay
5 cloth
6 dust
7 flesh
8 glass
9 grass
10 gravel
11 ivory
12 leather
13 marble
14 mud
15 muscle
16 paper
17 silk
18 stone
19 wicker
20 wood

BODY PARTS

1 arm
2 elbow
3 finger
4 fist
5 foot
6 hand
7 head
8 heart
9 knee
10 leg
11 palm
12 toe

SEASONS

1 autumn
2 spring
3 summer
4 winter

GEMS & METALS

1 amber
2 bronze
3 copper
4 diamond
5 emerald
6 gold
7 iron
8 jade
9 ruby
10 sapphire
11 silver
12 steel

COLORS

1 black
2 blue
3 brown
4 gray
5 green
6 orange
7 purple
8 red
9 white
10 yellow

ELEMENTS

1 air
2 earth
3 fire
4 metal
5 water
6 wood

ANIMALS

1	2	3	4
1 ant	1 crane	1 lizard	1 rhinoceros
2 ape	2 dog	2 lobster	2 rooster
3 baboon	3 dolphin	3 mantis	3 seal
4 badger	4 donkey	4 monkey	4 scorpion
5 bat	5 dove	5 mouse	5 shark
6 bear	6 dragonfly	6 mule	6 sparrow
7 beetle	7 duck	7 octopus	7 spider
8 bee	8 eagle	8 otter	8 snake
9 boar	9 elephant	9 owl	9 squid
10 bull	10 fly	10 pig	10 starfish
11 butterfly	11 frog	11 fox	11 swallow
12 camel	12 gibbon	12 goat	12 tiger
13 chameleon	13 goose	13 orangutan	13 toad
14 carp	14 gorilla	14 ox	14 turtle
15 cat	15 hare	15 panda	15 viper
16 centipede	16 hawk	16 panther	16 wasp
17 chicken	17 horse	17 peacock	17 whale
18 cockroach	18 iguana	18 raccoon	18 weasel
19 cobra	19 leopard	19 ram	19 wolf
20 crab	20 lion	20 rat	20 yak

THEN

PEOPLE

1	2	3	4
1 ancestor	1 father	1 monk	1 scoundrel
2 assassin	2 friend	2 mother	2 shaman
3 ally	3 general	3 ninja	3 sister
4 child	4 guardian	4 overlord	4 sohai
5 beggar	5 hero	5 priest	5 soldier
6 brother	6 hunter	6 peasant	6 sorcerer
7 emperor	7 immortal	7 philosopher	7 student
8 empress	8 man	8 saint	8 warrior
9 enemy	9 mandarin	9 samurai	9 woman
10 eunuch	10 master	10 scholar	10 wu jen

THEN

MISC. ADJECTIVES

1 ancient	27 fortunate	52 killer	78 sneaky
2 angry	28 furious	53 lame	79 solar
3 anxious	29 gentle	54 lazy	80 sorcerous
4 beautiful	30 ghostly	55 lost	81 subtle
5 blind	31 giant	56 lucky	82 sudden
6 bloody	32 graceful	57 mad	83 sundered
7 brave	33 handsome	58 magic	84 swift
8 celestial	34 heavenly	59 majestic	85 terrible
9 closed	35 hidden	60 merciful	86 treasured
10 crippled	36 holy	61 mighty	87 tortured
11 crazy	37 honorable	62 mischievous	88 twin
12 cruel	38 humble	63 old	89 tiny
13 cunning	39 hungry	64 open	90 ugly
14 deadly	40 immortal	65 otherworldly	91 unstoppable
15 defiant	41 imperial	66 pitiful	92 unusual
16 delicate	42 impossible	67 playful	93 vicious
17 doomed	43 infernal	68 pliant	94 villainous
18 drunken	44 insolent	69 powerful	95 weary
19 echoing	45 inspired	70 proud	96 wild
20 enlightened	46 insur-mountable	71 ready	97 wise
21 enviable	47 invulnerable	72 resilient	98 wondrous
22 fearful	48 jealous	73 respectable	99 wounded
23 fierce	49 joyous	74 righteous	100 young
24 foolish	50 just	75 ruthless	
25 forceful	51 judgmental	76 shadowless	
26 forgotten		77 sleepy	

MISC. NOUNS

1 ash	26 forest	51 needle	76 star
2 bag	27 fortress	52 ocean	77 stick
3 bell	28 fruit	53 palace	78 storm
4 blossom	29 fury	54 path	79 story
5 book	30 gate	55 pearl	80 stream
6 bowl	31 gourd	56 pebble	81 sun
7 bridge	32 god	57 pen	82 swamp
8 branch	33 grain	58 pillar	83 temple
9 cane	34 heaven	59 plain	84 thread
10 castle	35 hell	60 pond	85 thunder
11 cavern	36 hill	61 puddle	86 tomb
12 chain	37 hurricane	62 rain	87 tornado
13 city	38 ice	63 rice	88 tower
14 claw	39 ink	64 river	89 trail
15 cloud	40 jungle	65 road	90 tree
16 comet	41 lake	66 rock	91 twig
17 curse	42 leaf	67 roof	92 village
18 desert	43 legend	68 sand	93 vow
19 door	44 lightning	69 scroll	94 war
20 drum	45 log	70 sea	95 wall
21 fan	46 lotus	71 shrine	96 waterfall
22 farm	47 meteor	72 sky	97 wave
23 field	48 moon	73 snow	98 willow
24 flag	49 mountain	74 soul	99 wind
25 flower	50 mushroom	75 spark	100 window

Oriental Adventures Class Combinations

CLASS combos

by James Wyatt • illustrated by Jeremy Jarvis

Multiclass characters are significantly less common in the worlds of *Oriental Adventures* than they are in most D&D worlds. However, "significantly less common" does not mean "completely unheard of." While some combinations are unlikely or impossible for a variety of reasons, certain class combinations do qualify as the sort of "iconic multiclasses" described in the "Class Combos" article in *Dragon Annual* #5. In fact, the *Oriental Adventures* rules allow monks to multiclass freely, opening up a whole new realm of possibilities for multiclass characters.

Combining both the new and standard classes of *Oriental Adventures* yields a new set of three multiclass character types that can be viewed as distinct classes: the martial artist (fighter/monk), the spirit warrior (fighter/shaman), and the monastic defender (monk/sohei).

Each iconic multiclass has a suggested level progression that maximizes the benefits from each class. An even level progression is often not the best plan, particularly when spellcasting classes are involved. However, if neither class is a character's racially favored class, a more even level progression is a good idea. The level progressions offered are suggestions only.

NEW MARTIAL ARTS STYLES

Spirit's Grasp Mastery

You have mastered the martial arts style of "Spirit's Grasp"—a hard/soft form emphasizing weapons, movement, and mental/spiritual training.

Prerequisites: Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Dodge, Mobility, Expertise, Whirlwind Attack, Ki Shout, ability to cast *castigate*.

Benefit: When you make a ki shout and at least one opponent is shaken, your effective caster level goes up by +1, improving spell effects dependent on caster level. (This increase in caster level does not grant you access to more spells.) The effect lasts for 10 minutes.

Note: A spirit warrior can master this style at 9th level by taking the prerequisite feats in the following or similar order: 1st—Ki Shout, Dodge (fighter bonus); 2nd—Improved Unarmed Strike (shaman bonus); 3rd—Iron Will; 4th—Mobility (fighter bonus); 6th—Expertise (shaman bonus); 8th—Spring Attack (fighter bonus); 9th—Whirlwind Attack.

Defender's Attack Mastery

You have mastered the martial arts style of "Defender's Attack"—a soft form.

Prerequisites: Improved Unarmed Strike, Stunning Fist (or monk's stunning attack), Dodge, Mobility, Expertise, Superior Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Unbalancing Strike, Defensive Strike, Remain Conscious

Benefit: Once per round, you can make an attack of opportunity against a single melee opponent who attacks you and misses. This counts against the maximum number of attacks of opportunity you can make in a round. When you are using the total defense action, you can apply your bonus from the Defensive Strike feat (+4 on your attack roll) to this attack of opportunity, instead of to your next attack against that opponent.

Note: A monastic defender can master this style at 14th level by taking the prerequisite feats in the following or similar order: 1st—Improved Unarmed Strike (monk bonus), Stunning Fist (or monk's Stunning attack), Dodge; 3rd—Combat Reflexes (monk bonus), Expertise; 6th—Deflect Arrows (sohei bonus), Unbalancing Strike; 9th—Superior Expertise; 10th—Remain Conscious (sohei bonus); 12th—Mobility; 14th—Defensive Strike (sohei bonus). A monastic defender could master the style at 12th level by taking Defensive Strike as her 6th-level feat, but then she gains no bonus feat for her 7th level in the sohei class. A single-classed sohei cannot qualify until 18th level.

Martial Artist

The martial artist (fighter/monk) is a master of certain styles of combat, using his bonus fighter feats to quickly master martial arts styles that a single-class character would find harder to learn. Martial artists are particularly adept at styles that utilize both armed and unarmed maneuvers, like the Meditation of War style, and styles that require a lot of feats, like the Mighty Works style.

Most martial artists keep their levels even or nearly so. Some martial artists prefer to gain more monk levels, in order to achieve the more fantastic monk abilities as well as increased unarmed damage. Others, especially those who favor armed styles, gain more fighter levels for the sake of increased hit points and additional feats.

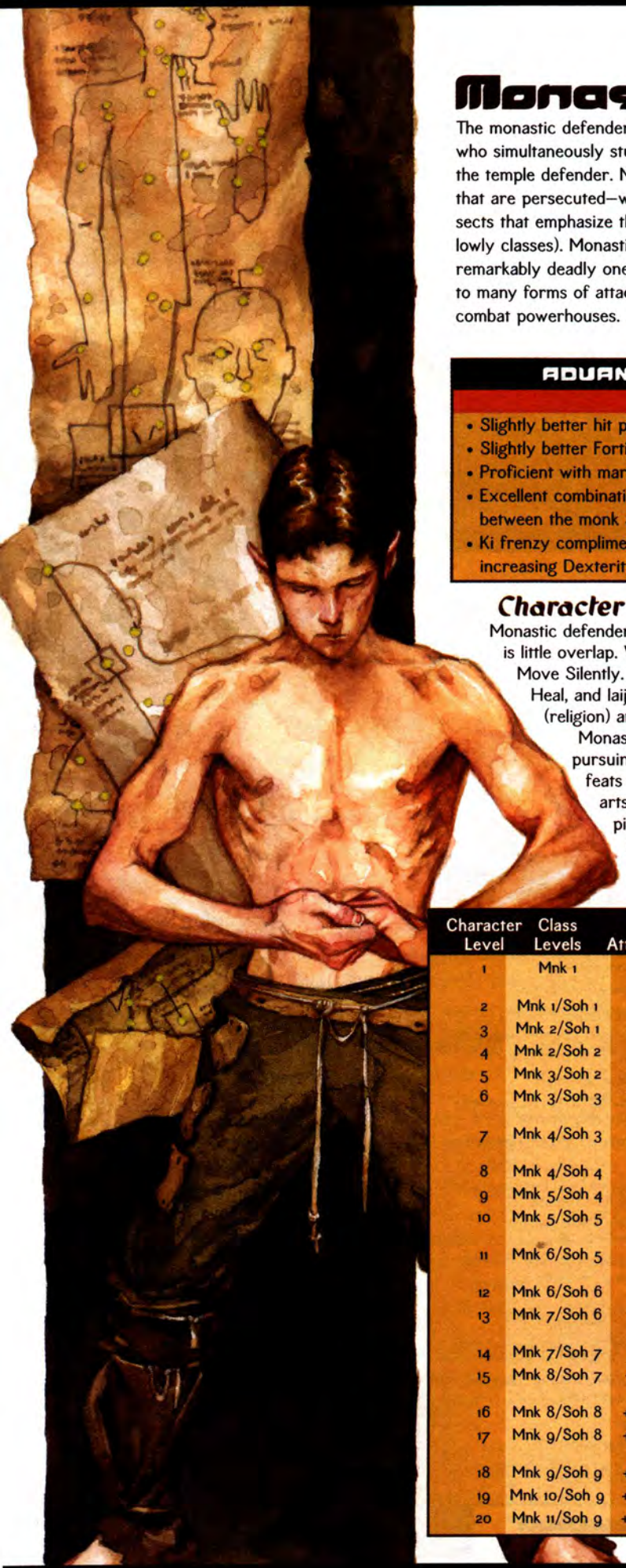
Advantages	Disadvantages
Compared to single-class monk	
• Better hit points • Better base attack • Proficient with martial weapons • Six more feats (fighter bonus feats) • Access to Weapon Specialization	• Worse unarmed damage, AC bonus, and speed than monk, and no access to the most fantastic class abilities • Weaker Reflex and Will saves • Fighter levels detract from ranks in monk class skills

Character Choices

Only a few fighter class skills are useful to the martial artist, with Climb and Jump being the most useful. These two are also class skills for monks. Tumble is a cross-class skill for fighters, but it is required for mastery of several martial arts styles, so many martial artists spend cross-class skill points on it when they advance in fighter levels. Bluff is also used (for feinting) in several martial arts styles, so martial artists frequently learn Bluff even though it is a cross-class skill for both fighters and monks.

A martial artist's feat selection is typically determined by the martial arts style he chooses to practice. The requirements for mastering a style are difficult enough that most martial artists focus exclusively on feats that are required for mastery of their chosen style. Once they achieve mastery, they turn to any remaining feats taught by their style and only rarely turn to feats taught by another style.

Character Level	Class Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort save	Ref save	Will save	Average hp	Abilities Gained
1	Mnk 1	+0	+2	+2	+2	8	Unarmed strike (1d6), stunning attack, evasion, AC bonus, feat
2	Ftr 1/Mnk 1	+1	+4	+2	+2	13	Proficient with martial weapons, bonus fighter feat
3	Ftr 1/Mnk 2	+2	+5	+3	+3	17	Martial arts feat, feat
4	Ftr 2/Mnk 2	+3	+6	+3	+3	22	Bonus fighter feat, ability increase
5	Ftr 2/Mnk 3	+4	+6	+3	+3	26	Still mind, fast movement (40 ft.)
6	Ftr 3/Mnk 3	+5	+6	+4	+4	31	Feat
7	Ftr 4/Mnk 3	+6/+1	+7	+4	+4	36	Bonus fighter feat
8	Ftr 4/Mnk 4	+7/+2	+8	+5	+5	40	Slow fall (20 ft.), unarmed strike (1d8), ability increase
9	Ftr 4/Mnk 5	+7/+2	+8	+5	+5	44	Purity of body, AC increase, feat
10	Ftr 5/Mnk 5	+8/+3	+8	+5	+5	49	
11	Ftr 5/Mnk 6	+9/+4	+9	+6	+6	53	Slow fall (30 ft.), martial arts feat, fast movement (50 ft.)
12	Ftr 6/Mnk 6	+10/+5	+10	+7	+7	58	Bonus fighter feat, feat, ability increase
13	Ftr 6/Mnk 7	+11/+6/+1	+10	+7	+7	62	Wholeness of body, leap of the clouds
14	Ftr 7/Mnk 7	+12/+7/+2	+10	+7	+7	67	
15	Ftr 8/Mnk 7	+13/+8/+3	+11	+7	+7	72	Feat, bonus fighter feat
16	Ftr 8/Mnk 8	+14/+9/+4	+12	+8	+8	76	Slow fall (50 ft.), unarmed strike (1d10), ability increase
17	Ftr 8/Mnk 9	+14/+9/+4	+12	+8	+8	80	Improved evasion, fast movement (60 ft.)
18	Ftr 9/Mnk 9	+15/+10/+5	+12	+9	+9	85	Feat
19	Ftr 10/Mnk 9	+16/+11/+6/+1	+13	+9	+9	90	Bonus fighter feat
20	Ftr 10/Mnk 10	+17/+12/+7/+2	+14	+10	+10	94	Ki strike (+1), AC increase, ability increase



Monastic Defender

The monastic defender is an unusual combination of the monk and sohei classes: a monk who simultaneously studied the internal disciplines of the spirit and the martial discipline of the temple defender. Monastic defenders are commonly found in temples or monasteries that are persecuted—where the monks must join in the defense of the temple—and among sects that emphasize the availability of spiritual perfection to all people (even the more lowly classes). Monastic defenders gain levels in their classes evenly. The combination is a remarkably deadly one: High-level monastic defenders are immune or extremely resistant to many forms of attack, and their ki frenzy combined with their monk abilities makes them combat powerhouses.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
COMPARED TO SINGLE-CLASS MONK	
• Slightly better hit points • Slightly better Fortitude and Will saves • Proficient with martial weapons • Excellent combination of resistances between the monk and sohei classes • Ki frenzy compliments monk's abilities, increasing Dexterity and speed	• Slightly worse Reflex save • Little overlap in class skills for the monk and sohei classes • No access to monk's high-level abilities

Character Choices

Monastic defenders tend to choose class skills from both of their classes equally, as there is little overlap. When they gain monk levels, they often gain ranks in Jump, Tumble, and Move Silently. When then gain sohei levels, they increase their ranks in Diplomacy, Heal, and Iaijutsu Focus. Monastic defenders tend to have high ranks in Knowledge (religion) and Concentration since these are class skills for both classes.

Monastic defenders generally focus on combat-oriented feats, sometimes pursuing martial arts mastery. Except for Deflect Arrows, the bonus sohei feats do not contribute to the mastery of any of the most common martial arts styles, and unlike monks, the sohei does not have the option of swapping out these feats for others. However, like spirit warriors, monastic defenders have developed martial arts styles of their own. One such style is the Defender's Attack style described in the New Martial Arts Styles sidebar.

Character Level	Class Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort save	Ref save	Will save	Average hp	Abilities Gained
1	Mnk 1	+0	+2	+2	+2	8	Unarmed strike (1d6), stunning attack, evasion, AC bonus, feat
2	Mnk 1/Soh 1	+0	+4	+2	+4	13	Ki frenzy 1/day, Weapon Focus
3	Mnk 2/Soh 1	+1	+5	+3	+5	17	Martial arts feat, feat
4	Mnk 2/Soh 2	+2	+6	+3	+6	22	Ability increase
5	Mnk 3/Soh 2	+3	+6	+3	+6	26	Still mind, fast movement (40 ft.)
6	Mnk 3/Soh 3	+4	+6	+4	+6	31	Ki frenzy 2/day, Deflect Arrows, feat
7	Mnk 4/Soh 3	+5	+7	+5	+7	35	Slow fall (20 ft.), unarmed strike (1d8)
8	Mnk 4/Soh 4	+6/+1	+8	+5	+8	40	1st-level spells, ability increase
9	Mnk 5/Soh 4	+6/+1	+8	+5	+8	44	Purity of body, AC increase, feat
10	Mnk 5/Soh 5	+6/+1	+8	+5	+8	49	Remain Conscious, strength of mind
11	Mnk 6/Soh 5	+7/+2	+9	+6	+9	54	Slow fall (30 ft.), martial arts feat, fast movement (50 ft.)
12	Mnk 6/Soh 6	+8/+3	+10	+7	+10	59	Ability increase, feat
13	Mnk 7/Soh 6	+9/+4	+10	+7	+10	63	Wholeness of body, leap of the clouds
14	Mnk 7/Soh 7	+10/+5	+10	+7	+10	68	Defensive Strike, ki frenzy 3/day
15	Mnk 8/Soh 7	+11/+6/+1	+11	+8	+11	72	Slow fall (50 ft.), unarmed strike (1d10), feat
16	Mnk 8/Soh 8	+12/+7/+2	+12	+8	+12	77	2nd-level spells, ability increase
17	Mnk 9/Soh 8	+12/+7/+2	+12	+8	+12	81	Improved evasion, fast movement (60 ft.), feat
18	Mnk 9/Soh 9	+12/+7/+2	+12	+9	+12	86	Mettle
19	Mnk 10/Soh 9	+13/+8/+3	+13	+10	+13	90	Ki strike (+1), AC increase
20	Mnk 11/Soh 9	+14/+9/+4	+13	+10	+13	94	Diamond body, ability increase

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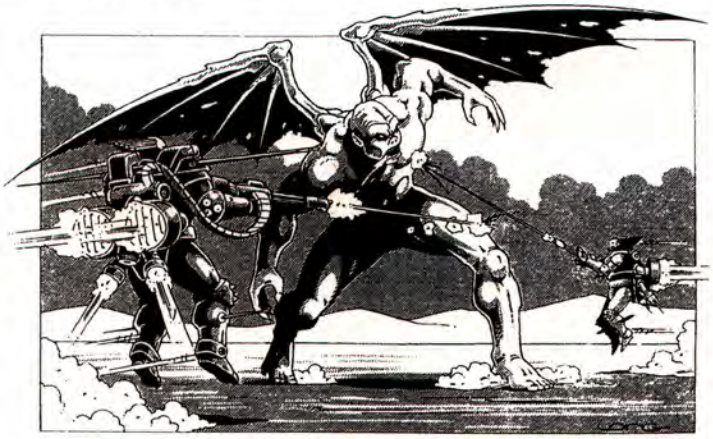

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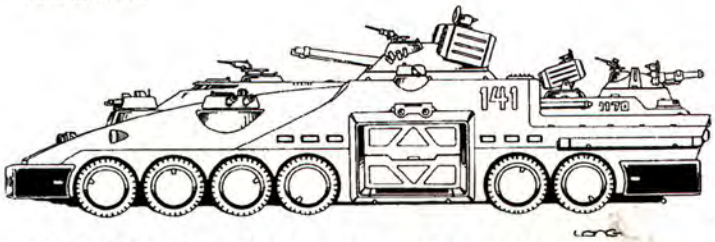

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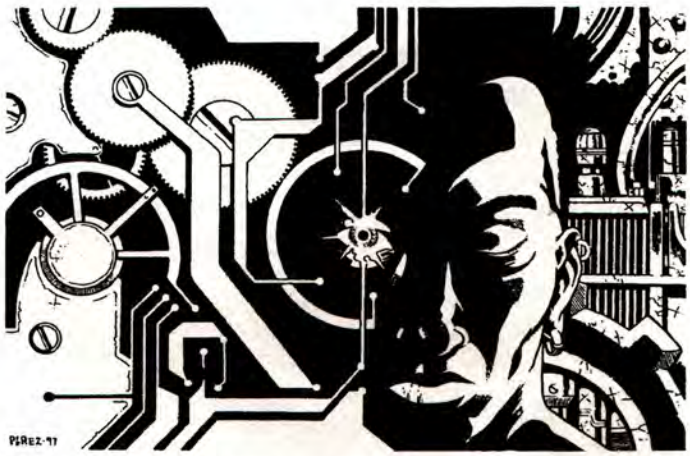

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Spirit Warrior

The spirit warrior (fighter/shaman) is a martial artist whose greatest power comes from the host of spirits around her—primarily her ancestors, but also nature spirits, animal spirits, and the spirit of her weapon. Her fighter levels give her the weapon and armor proficiencies she needs, as well as a broad selection of bonus feats, while her shaman levels attune her to the Spirit World, give her bonus martial arts feats, and grant her spells.

For the spirit warrior, the "warrior" side of her skill set is just as important as the "spirit" side, so she follows a more even progression than most multiclass spellcasters.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
COMPARED TO SINGLE-CLASS SHAMAN	
• More hit points	• Slower spell progression and slower access to spells
• Better base attack	• Weaker Will saves
• Better Fortitude saves	• Slower access to class skills
• Proficient with martial weapons	
• Additional bonus feats	
• Access to Weapon Specialization	
• Access to fighter class skills	

Character Choices

Shamans have more skill points than fighters, which allows the spirit warrior to keep ranks in both fighter skills and shaman skills. However, there is little overlap between the class skills of the two classes. Most spirit warriors begin with fighter skills like Climb, Jump, and Swim, and advance these skills only when they gain fighter levels. They then lag behind their maximum ranks in shaman skills.

Spirit warriors often spend their feats to qualify for mastery of martial arts styles like the Gentle Way. Spirit warriors may learn unusual martial arts styles beyond those covered in *Oriental Adventures,* including some that make specific use of their magical abilities. One such style, Spirit's Grasp, is described in the New Martial Arts Styles sidebar.

Character Level	Class Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort save	Ref save	Will save	Average hp	Abilities Gained
1	Ftr 1	+1	+2	+0	+0	10	Proficient with martial weapons, bonus fighter feat, feat
2	Ftr 1/Sha 1	+1	+2	+0	+2	13	Spells, Improved Unarmed Strike, animal companion
3	Ftr 1/Sha 2	+2	+2	+0	+3	16	Feat, spirit sight
4	Ftr 2/Sha 2	+3	+3	+0	+3	21	Bonus fighter feat, ability increase
5	Ftr 2/Sha 3	+4	+4	+1	+3	24	2nd-level spells, turn or rebuke undead
6	Ftr 2/Sha 4	+5	+4	+1	+4	27	Bonus shaman feat, feat
7	Ftr 3/Sha 4	+6/+1	+4	+2	+5	32	
8	Ftr 4/Sha 4	+7/+2	+5	+2	+5	37	Bonus fighter feat, can take Weapon Specialization, ability increase
9	Ftr 4/Sha 5	+7/+2	+5	+2	+5	40	3rd-level spells, spirits' favor, feat
10	Ftr 4/Sha 6	+8/+3	+6	+3	+6	43	
11	Ftr 4/Sha 7	+9/+4	+6	+3	+6	46	4th-level spells
12	Ftr 4/Sha 8	+10/+5	+6	+3	+7	49	Bonus shaman feat, feat, ability increase
13	Ftr 5/Sha 8	+11/+6/+1	+6	+3	+7	54	
14	Ftr 5/Sha 9	+11/+6/+1	+7	+4	+7	57	5th-level spells
15	Ftr 6/Sha 9	+12/+7/+2	+8	+5	+8	62	Bonus fighter feat, feat
16	Ftr 6/Sha 10	+13/+8/+3	+8	+5	+9	65	Ability increase
17	Ftr 6/Sha 11	+14/+9/+4	+8	+5	+9	68	6th-level spells, third domain
18	Ftr 7/Sha 11	+15/+10/+5	+8	+5	+9	73	Feat
19	Ftr 7/Sha 12	+16/+11/+6/+1	+9	+6	+10	76	Bonus shaman feat
20	Ftr 8/Sha 12	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+6	+10	81	Bonus fighter feat, ability increase

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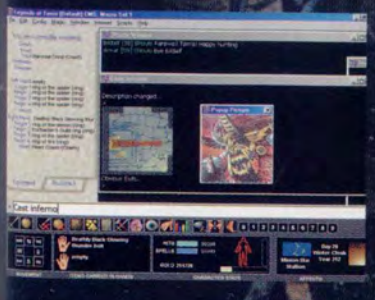

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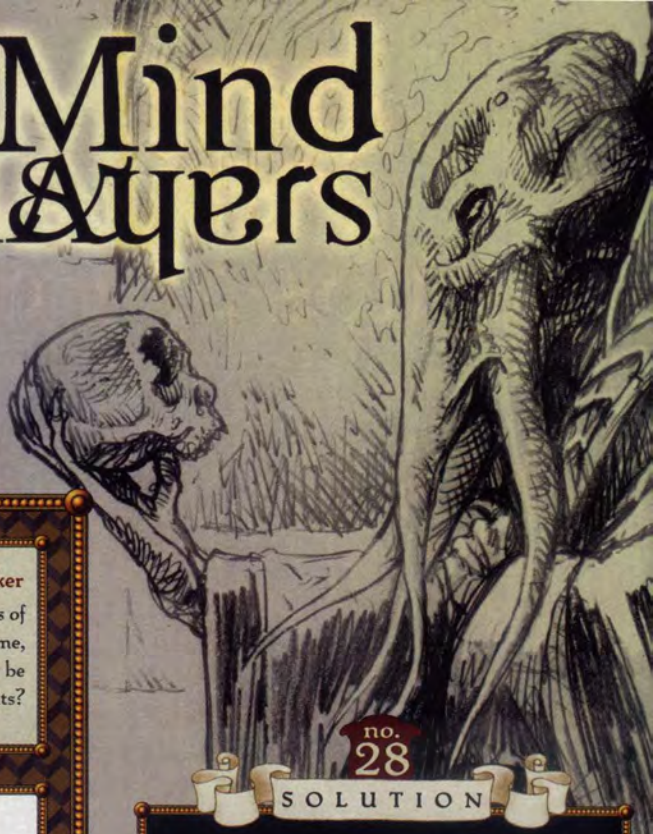
Mind flayers



MIND BLAST

What class feature, when you reverse it, becomes a three-word sentence that you could say triumphantly when you successfully use it?

You can find the solution to this *MIND BLAST* on page 88.

no. 29

by Mike Selinker

The words below are spell components—that is, they are components of the names of *Player's Handbook* spells. Each word can be found in consecutive letters in a spell name, bridging a phrase of two or more words. For example, the component GEAR can be found in both *maGE ARmor* and *miraGE ARcana*. What spells use these components?

1. ALTO
2. BLED
3. DEBAR
4. ECLAIR
5. FLAW
6. HANDS
7. HOSTS
8. KITE
9. LAMES
10. LANES
11. MALT
12. MARROW
13. MATED
14. MEMO
15. NICE
16. ORALS
17. ORPHAN
18. PICS
19. PIKES
20. REEL
21. RESAND
22. REST
23. RETCHES
24. SHAM
25. SINS
26. SLAUGHTER
27. SONORA
28. SWAT
29. TABLEAU
30. TERSE
31. THEBANS
32. ZINGS

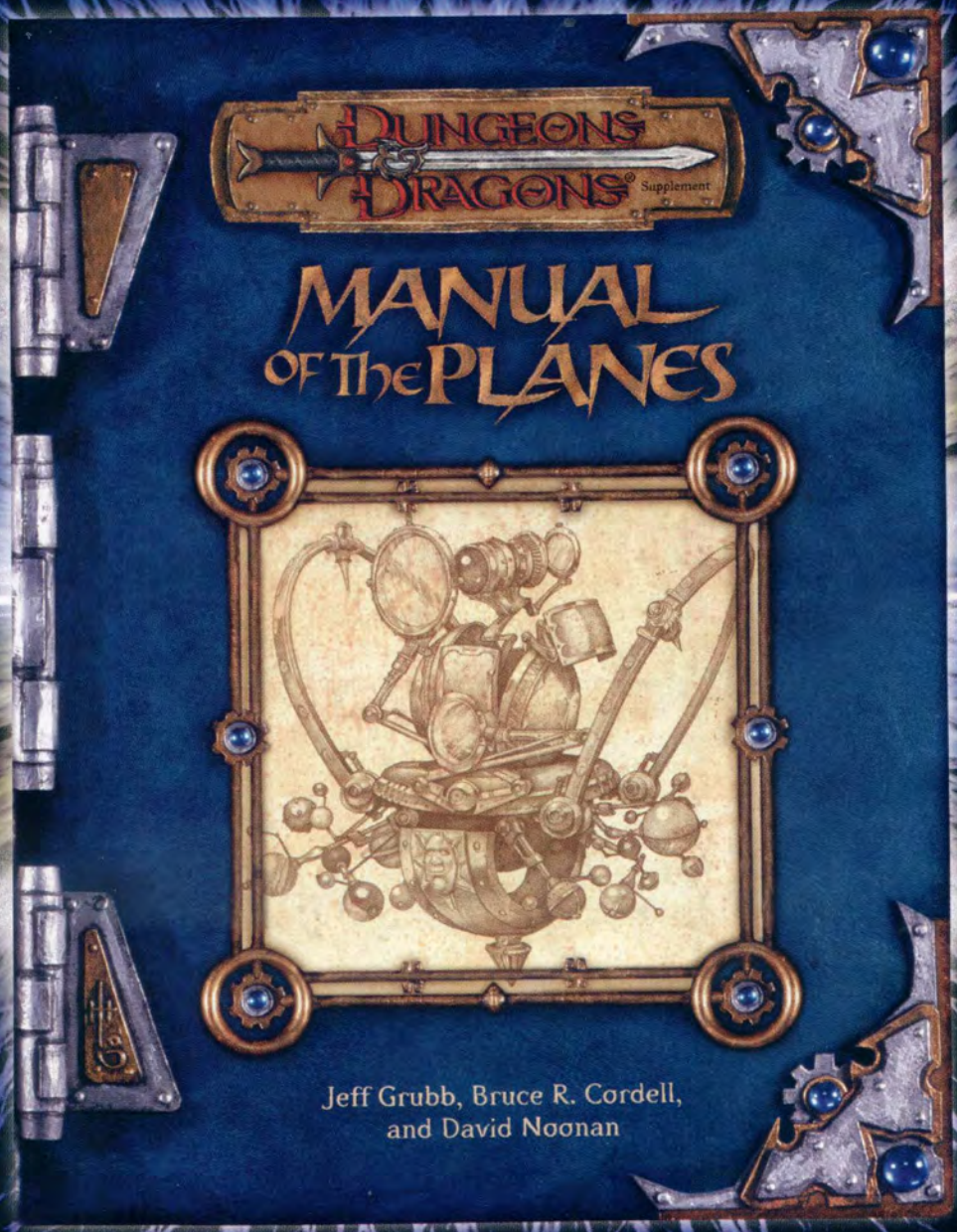
no. 28 SOLUTION

The box's squares have been numbered in this solution. The locations of the plaques in the list below are spelled out in the numbered squares. For example, KEY is in squares 1, 9, and 10. A few slightly different solutions are possible.

1 K	2 R	3 B	4 L	5 U	6 K		
7 E	8 U	9 E	10 Y	11 A	12 L	13 A	14 S
15 G	16 M	17 F	18 T	19 E	20 C	21 N	22 U
23 T	24 O	25 L	26 H	27 F	28 O	29 D	30 T
31 V	32 O	33 R	34 A	35 M	36 G	37 O	38 H
39 I	40 E	41 N	42 T	43 E	44 J	45 N	46 G
47 Z	48 D	49 H	50 S	51 R	52 U	53 I	54 K

BALANCE	3	11	12	13	21	20	19	
COMET	20	28	35	43	42			
DONJON	29	37	45	44	37	45		
EURYALE	9	8	2	10	11	12	19	
FLAMES	16	25	34	35	43	50		
FOOL	16	24	32	25				
GEM	36	43	35					
IDIOT	39	48	39	32	23			
JESTER	44	43	50	42	43	51		
KEY	1	9	10					
KNIGHT	54	45	53	45	38	30		
MOON	17	24	32	41				
ROGUE	33	24	15	8	7			
RUIN	51	52	53	54				
SKULL	14	6	5	12	4			
STAR	50	42	34	33				
SUN	14	22	21					
TALONS	42	34	25	32	41	50		
THE FATES	18	26	19	27	34	42	43	50
THE VOID	42	49	40	31	32	39	48	
THRONE	18	26	33	32	41	40		
VIZIER	31	39	47	39	40	33		

WHEN YOU'VE FINISHED SAVING THE WORLD, MOVE ON TO THE NEXT.



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CITIES of the AGES

PARIS

BY KENNETH HITE · ILLUSTRATED BY D.T. STRAIN

"I am in Paris, in that royal city where abundance of natural wealth not only holds those who live here, but also attracts those from afar. Just as the moon outshines the stars in brilliance, so does this city, the seat of the monarchy, lift her proud head above the rest."

—Gui de Bazoches

We'll always have Paris, and indeed we always have. The "City of Lights" has become a center point of the Western world. Here, rogues lurk, wizards and clerics study, and paladins arm themselves as the soon-to-be-sainted King Louis IX prepares for a Crusade against Egypt later in the year. Parisians know that they dwell in the finest city in the finest country under the finest king in all of Christendom, and they're not far from the truth. Out over the thatched roofs and stone streets, the superstructure of the Middle Ages rises in Gothic buttresses and scholastic disputation, drawing the curious, the restless, and the powerful from all across Europe—including your heroes.

HISTORY

Paris takes its name from its first settlers, the Gallic tribe known as the Parisii. Around 200 B.C. they built a fishing village on an island in the river, Lutetia Parisiorum, which the Romans conquered and then expanded to the left bank. Despite St. Denis's execution on the "Mount of Martyrs" (Montmartre) north of the city, Paris soon turned devoutly Christian. Faith in God, and the Seine River, kept Paris reasonably secure from Goths, Huns, and Vikings; with security came trade, and with trade came prosperity. Soon, Paris became the royal city under the Parisian Capet dynasty and hosted the great yearly Fair of Saint-Denis, where goods and people from across Europe intermingled. Now, under the ninth Louis (and the ninth Capet) to rule France, Paris rejoices in her reputation as the greatest city in Christendom.

"Paris, queen among cities, moon among stars, so gracious a valley, an island of royal palaces. The Seine, proud river of the East, runs there a brimming stream, and holds in its arms an island which is the head, the heart, the marrow of the whole city. Two suburbs extend to right and left, of which the lesser alone rivals many cities. Each of these two suburbs communicates with the island by two bridges of stone; the Grand Pont on the side of England, the Petit Pont towards the Loire. The Grand Pont is great, rich, and is the scene of seething activity; innumerable ships surround it, filled with merchandise and riches. The Petit Pont belongs to the dialecticians, who walk there deep in argument . . ."

—Gui de Bazoches

Paris's reputation might be deserved. Under the great king Philip II Augustus, Paris expanded in all senses—economically thanks to new marketplaces, spiritually with the grand Gothic cathedrals, intellectually through the newly founded University, and most of all, physically. Philip began draining the marshes (les Marais) on the right bank of the Seine, creating rich new farmland to feed Paris's growing population, which numbered over 50,000 people. Philip also founded three hospitals to heal his subjects, the Hôtel-Dieu (a hospital for the poor run by the medical school), l'Hôpital Trinité, and l'Hôpital Sainte-Catherine, which also serves as a hiring hall for young women seeking employment. Paris even boasts 26 public hot baths, an unimaginable luxury for this century. Around his city, Philip built an 8-foot-thick, 33-foot-high wall, encompassing 625 acres—almost a square mile. Philip also laid down massive sandstone blocks to pave the four main streets (rue) of Paris: the Rue Saint-Martin, the Rue Saint-Jacques, the Rue Saint-Antoine, and the Rue Saint-Honoré.

These four streets form a cross, converging on the Church of Saint-Jacques in the middle of the right—or north—bank of the Seine River, the area known as the Ville. The left bank, or Latin Quarter, south of the river, is the University district, and the island in the middle of the river is called the Île de la Cité (island of the city). On the Île de la Cité rises the old royal palace (now the court of justice and of the royal Parliament), the Hôtel-Dieu hospital, and the magnificent cathedral of Notre Dame du Paris. The furriers' district, the pork market, and the cloth makers and drapers give the island its economic engine. The Rue Saint-Martin runs north from the wooden Bridge of Notre Dame (Pont Notre Dame), through the Gate of Saint-Martin to the Abbey of Saint-Martin-in-the-Fields north of the city. The Rue du Saint-Denis parallels it on the west, running to the Abbey of Saint-Denis north of Montmartre and its market square. The Rue Saint-Jacques runs south from the Petit Pont bridge, past the rooming-houses, taverns, and colleges of the

University, and on to the commandery of the Knights Hospitaller outside the Gate of Saint-Jacques. Their bitter rivals, the Templars, hold their Temple northeast of the city, on the Rue du Temple. Near the center of the University district, the Provost of Paris and the leading burgesses administer the city from the Parloir aux Bourgeois. The Rue Saint-Antoine runs east, paralleling the right bank of the Seine, passing the wharves and old grain-market at the Place de Grève, and heading into the slums of Saint-Gervais, where feral pigs run rampant and crowds of prostitutes convene on street corners. Here, unsurprisingly, rises the Châtelet prison and police station. The Rue Saint-Honoré runs west, also paralleling the right bank, from the Pourceaux cattle market south of Les Halles to the north side of the Louvre fortress on the western gate of the city.

UNIVERSITY OF PARIS

The University of Paris doesn't have a main building or formal centerpiece. (That won't come until Louis commissions his chaplain, Robert de Sorbonne, to create one in 1253.) Its many colleges are simply the establishments of whatever scholar can convince students to pay him for tuition. The University, which essentially functions like a scholars' guild, has faculties of theology, medicine, canon law, and the arts (poetry, rhetoric, geometry, astrology, and so on). Students come from all over Europe, and national rivalries often erupt into brawls or swordplay; the students in turn fight continuously with the town watch and with the local shopkeepers. Any hero looking for a scrap of obscure lore or a scrape with an arrogant pack of thugs need only look to the University.

THE CATACOMBS

Beneath the left bank lie ancient cemeteries connected by a maze of rock quarries running nearly 60 miles throughout the area. The high ground south of the city near the Hospitaller commandery conceals the best entrances to these catacombs; other tunnels emerge in the Marais just north of the river, or at the churchyard of St. Marcel on the Rue Saint-Marcel southeast of the city walls. Any number of deep subcellars or wells throughout the Latin Quarter may open onto the catacombs, which serve as informal dueling places, discreet places to dispose of (or collect) bodies, necromantic laboratories, and sites for other, even less savory, practices. The Templars and Hospitallers probably know the catacomb network as well as any humans do; both ghouls and troglodytes are reputed to haunt these dark, twisting passages.

ADVENTURES IN PARIS

With all this there were so many criminals and thieves in Paris and the adjoining country that the whole land was full of them.

—Jean de Joinville, Life of St. Louis

With the whole country full of criminals and thieves, your heroes will have many worthy foes on whom to test their steel. King Louis and the Provost of Paris reward those who can rid Paris of evildoers, even if the evildoers wear the uniforms of the town sergeants. On the other hand, the rich purses of clerics and merchants always reward those who can rid their owners of excess gold and silver. Here are a few situations requiring intervention in the City of Light:

- A plague of gargoyles has descended upon Paris. Ordinarily kept at bay by the stonemasons' charms and sacred geometries, they haunt the rooftops and churchyards, preying on victims at whim. Noble heroes will wish to kill or drive off this infestation; less-noble ones might be interested in where the gargoyles have stashed the treasure their victims carried.

- In a garret room above the left bank, a brilliant but twisted medical student has discovered a new technique for creating flesh golems. All she requires are fresh corpses, a *lightning bolt* spell, a large quantity of copper pieces, and some obscure alchemical ingredients. Can your heroes stop her before her mad plans flood the Latin quarter with monstrosities?

- The mighty stone Grand Pont, flung 500 feet across the Seine at the Rue Saint-Denis, is the economic heart of Paris. Its mighty mills grind the grain for the city's bread, while money-changers, goldsmiths, bankers, jewelers, and fences keep the city's coinage circulating from stalls along its sides. Recently, however, a greedy bridge-troll has taken to robbing, and sometimes eating, the vulnerable merchants, drastically cutting into business. The richer merchants, fearful for their lives and livelihood, have put together an impressive reward for the brave soul that rids the neighborhood of the bridge-troll.

- About two-thirds of a mile downstream from the Tour de Nesle is the Passage d'Alma, or "passage of the soul." On this low, grassy field by the Seine, the ancient Merovingian kings judged their vassals through trial by combat. Legend has it that anyone killed here goes directly to heaven without stopping in Purgatory. A disturbing sect has been kidnapping young Parisian maidens of good family, and rumor has it they've been drowning the victims here. Are they misguided maniacs, procurers for the colony of merfolk in the lower Seine, or a dark cult seeking to awaken the human-sacrifice deities of the ancient Gauls that this spot once fed?

- As France prepares for the upcoming Crusade on Egypt, word on the street is that the Knights Templar will pay handsomely for powerful religious relics that might help them in battle against the heathens. However, there are those that think this order has become too powerful and wealthy, and they seek its destruction. They believe that the order already has a number of relics, including the Arc of the Covenant, the Holy Grail, and the Shroud of Turin, in its possession, which they use for unholy purposes. Those who oppose the Knights Templar seek confirmation of these rumors and confiscation of the relics.

2
RUE ST. DENIS
RUE ST. MARTIN
1
4
3
RUE ST. ANTOINE
PALAIS DU ROI
GRAND PONT
7
6
HÔTEL DIEU
ILE DE LA CITÉ
PETIT PONT
5
SEINE RIVER
RUE ST. JACQUES

NOTRE DAME DU PARIS

1
LES HALLES

2
COUR DES MIRACLES

3
CIMETIÈRE DES INNOCENTS

4
LOUVRE

5
NOTRE DAME DU PARIS

6
SAINTE-CHAPELLE

7
TOUR DE NESLE

LOCAL HEROES

All characters are presented as of 1248. Character levels are suggestions, and you should change them to suit your campaigns.

Thomas Aquinas (born 1225)
1st-level aristocrat/2nd-level wizard/2nd-level cleric
This brilliant young aristocrat has given up his family estates in Italy to study magic and theology in Paris under Roger Bacon and Albertus Magnus. Although he makes an excellent entry into either scholar's circle, his disturbingly keen mind will discover any falsehood the heroes try to spin.

Guillaume d'Auvergne (born 1180)
2nd-level aristocrat/7th-level cleric
This well-regarded, honest scholar and theologian is the Archbishop of Paris. He backs the King in any disputes with the Pope, and so retains considerable power over the Church in the city. He does, however, privately question the level of heresy and magic present at the University.

Roger Bacon (born 1214)
3rd-level cleric/7th-level wizard
Widely known as the greatest magician in Christendom, Roger Bacon prefers experiments in natural philosophy and alchemy. He has already created lenses to improve vision, a flying machine, a black explosive powder, and a bronze oracular head that can see the future. He tries to avoid drawing the attention of his Franciscan brothers to his experiments.

Vincent de Beauvais (born 1190?)
2nd-level aristocrat/4th-level cleric
As lector and chaplain to the royal court, this noble priest (and his Dominican order) has great influence over Louis's policies. A capable administrator, Vincent prefers the scholarly life; he spends most of his time confined to his monastery, where he works to compile an encyclopedia of all known lore.

Blanche of Castile (born 1188)
8th-level aristocrat/2nd-level fighter
The mother of Louis IX, she served as regent of France during his infancy and will likely resume that role when Louis goes on Crusade. She believes in strict, unbending law and morality and does not approve of Louis's wife, Queen Marguerite of Provence.

Albert von Bollstadt (born 1193)
3rd-level aristocrat/4th-level cleric/4th-level wizard/2nd-level loremaster
Known as Doctor Universalis (the Universal Doctor) and Albertus Magnus (Albert the Great), the Count of Bollstadt is the finest scholar of the University. He is equally famed for his sanctity, his magic knowledge, and his pure intellect.

Jean de Joinville (born 1224?)
1st-level aristocrat/5th-level fighter
A brave knight, although not in the King's service, de Joinville works to organize the Crusade. An inveterate diarist and gossip, he knows everything worth knowing about the noble and knightly goings-on in the city.

Louis IX, King of France (born 1214)
8th-level aristocrat/4th-level paladin/2nd-level cleric
Raised in an atmosphere of holiness and restraint, Louis passionately believes that he is the chosen sword-arm of God. Although his feverish devotion unnerves even the bishops, he truly loves and cares for his people and selects good servants to run his domains.

Pierre de Montreuil (born 1200?)
8th-level expert/3rd-level wizard
The greatest of the Gothic master masons, Pierre de Montreuil serves as the architect to many magnificent buildings, especially the cathedrals of Saint-Denis and Notre Dame, and of Louis's Sainte-Chapelle. His Compagnons des Devoirs are said to encode magical lore into the buildings they construct.

William de Sonnac (born 1200?)
8th-level paladin/4th-level cleric
Grand Master of the Paris Templars, de Sonnac heads one of the most powerful independent fighting forces in France. He also commands the forces preparing to accompany Louis on Crusade, and his agents are everywhere buying weapons, armor, relics, and other necessities.

LOCATIONS

1. Les Halles: Philip Augustus established these two great enclosed market-halls in 1183 as the main marketplace for the north or right bank of Paris. Here traders rent stalls and sell produce, handicrafts, woven cloth, metalwork, grain, and other goods from stalls that can be locked at night. It is here, also, that the city burns heretics at the stake.

2. Cour des Miracles: About two-thirds of a mile north of Les Halles, well outside the city walls, a thick tangle of shacks and taverns surrounds the Cour des Miracles (Court of Miracles) on the Rue Saint-Denis. It takes its name from the false beggars of Paris, who retreat here after dark to take off their bandages and put away their crutches, "miraculously" healed when nobody is watching. This court is the headquarters of the thieves and rogues in Paris who prey on the markets all along the road from Les Halles to Saint-Denis.

3. Cimetière des Innocents: Directly south of Les Halles, separated from it by a stone wall, is the largest cemetery in Paris. Dating back over three centuries, the burial ground spits up recent corpses after heavy rains; there are more bodies here than the ground can hold. Feral pigs swarm the grounds by night, and street urchins and prostitutes whisper of ghosts, ghouls, and other horrors as well. The watch that guards Les Halles keeps the cemetery closed after dark to prevent university students from stealing bodies for medical study.

4. Louvre: Philip Augustus began constructing this impregnable fortress at the lower (louvre) edge of the city in 1204 to serve as his royal castle. Securing the western wall at the river, the Louvre's thick walls run 75 yards on each side, making a square around a dungeon tower 96 feet tall. King Louis divides his time between the Louvre and the Palais Royal; the Louvre primarily serves as a working palace, holding the archives, treasury, and arsenal. Louis's agents continually accumulate records, scrolls, and ancient histories to improve the archives here.

5. Notre Dame du Paris: This masterpiece of Gothic cathedral design and construction towers over the city of Paris, dominating the eastern end of the Île de la Cité. The church, which began construction in 1163 on the remains of a Roman temple to the Magna Mater, the earth goddess, preserves a basic Roman basilica outline; the crosswise transepts are still under construction. The mighty twin towers were just completed in 1245 and rise 228 feet into the air over the market square below. Like all cathedrals, Notre Dame serves as a marketplace, a meeting place, and a hiring-hall.

6. Sainte-Chapelle: Louis had his "Holy Chapel" built onto the side of the Royal Palace so that he would have a suitable place for his constant prayer and meditation. Its tall, narrow stained-glass windows and tapering 245-foot spire give it an ethereal, almost unearthly feel. Devout Parisians consider it a "gateway to heaven;" the impossible speed of its construction (only three years) argues for some kind of miraculous or supernatural help, but the masons remain silent on the issue. In addition to a priceless archive of holy texts, histories, and other lorebooks, the Sainte-Chapelle holds the mightiest relics in Christendom: the Crown of Thorns, a piece of the True Cross, and the Spear of Destiny.

7. Tour de Nesle: This 100-foot tower across the Seine from the Louvre anchors the river chain, which the city lowers at night to close river traffic (another one blocks the upstream). It also holds an armory, a dungeon, and a garrison of royal guards. Lurid University rumor insists that Queen Marguerite seduces poor but handsome students here. Once she has her pleasure, however, she then orders her guards to sew the unlucky lover into a sack and throw him off the tower into the river to drown.

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The Foes of STORMWEATHER II

The Villains of *Black Wolf*

by Dave Gross • illustrated by Stefano Gaudiano

To the Old Chauncel, the merchant-lords of Selgaunt, piracy is the worst of the common crimes. Stealing from an individual is one thing, but to deprive the nobles of their tariffs and their control of trade is to threaten their rule, and this they will not abide—especially among their peers.

When the city uncovered Aldimar Uskevren's crimes, the Old Chauncel razed Stormweather Towers and confiscated the family fortunes, leaving only his younger son to survive. In the decades since, the prudent and scrupulous Thamalon Uskevren has gradually restored the family to its former wealth and power. At every turn, he refused to deal with the underworld of Selgaunt, even when a few illicit bargains would have sped the restoration of the Uskevren fortune. After years of cautious watching, the nobles of Selgaunt eventually came to respect Thamalon's honorable dealings, and the smugglers of the city learned he was no friend to them.

Thamalon's position became clear to authorities and criminals alike some twenty years ago. In that year, which saw the birth of Thamalon's youngest son, the sorcerer Velanna Malveen fled from the Old Chauncel's warships after the nobles found evidence of her piracy. Desperate, she sent pleas for help to those who had once profited from her crimes, including the son of her old friend Aldimar. Thamalon refused to honor his father's old debt to the pirate queen, and he assumed the matter was ended when Velanna and her second son, Stannis, sank with their besieged ship.

The surviving Malveen children inherited only meager wealth, their family holdings forfeited to the city and their ancestral mansion seized and converted into a warehouse for captured contraband. Laskar Malveen, Velanna's eldest child, appeared to follow Thamalon's example by rejecting his mother's wicked path and leading an honest life as patriarch of his own fallen house. With accounting help from his younger brother Radu, Laskar began the arduous task of rebuilding the family fortunes while their younger siblings melted back into Selgaunt's social life in pursuit of honorable—and profitable—marriages.

What Laskar did not know was that, in the days after their mother's death, Radu discovered a fantastic secret in the abandoned House Malveen. Stannis had returned from his watery grave, swearing revenge on those he blamed for killing his mother and destroying his family. Together, Radu and Stannis swore to restore their family fortunes by any means necessary, concealing their deeds from Laskar to protect the surviving Malveens.

For years, Radu has managed to keep his monstrous brother's desire for revenge in check, but now an old friend of the Malveen family has returned at Stannis's request. In exchange for a sacred text that could be his key to ultimate power, the werewolf Rusk has infected the youngest of the Uskevren children with his own lifelong curse.

Soon, Rusk begins to recognize something far more important than lycanthropy within the young Talbot Uskevren. To him, the boy could be the perfect vessel of the power he craves for himself. To Stannis, the boy remains the instrument of his revenge. To Radu, the entire venture is an unnecessary risk—one that might require his personal attention. The desires of all three of these monsters converge in *Black Wolf*, the fourth book of the FORGOTTEN REALMS Sembia series.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

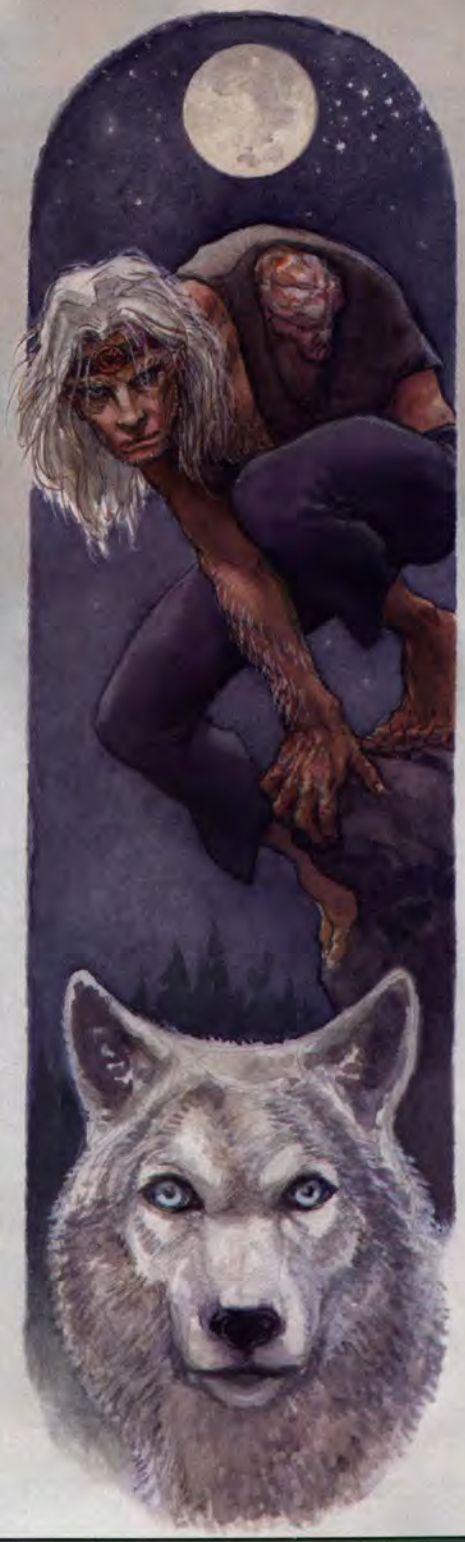
Talisman of Malar
This copper amulet acts both as a holy symbol of Malar and as an *amulet of natural armor +1*. However, due to Malar's blessing, the *talisman* grants a +4 deflection bonus to a lycanthrope's AC.

Caster level: 12th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *barkskin, shield of faith;* **Market price:** 24,425 gp; **Cost to Create:** 12,212 gp + 977 XP.

Bone Blade
This *+2 dagger* has the same effects as a *nine lives stealer* (see the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* page 189). In addition to the effects listed there, those killed by the weapon's death-dealing ability cannot be raised or resurrected; only a *miracle* or *wish* spell is powerful enough to return them to life. If the *bone blade* is used to attack an undead creature, the dagger is instantly destroyed in an explosion of white light that deals 15d6 points of damage due to overwhelming positive energy to all creatures within the 20-ft.-radius burst. Creatures within the burst can make a Reflex save (DC 17) for half damage.

Caster level: 15th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *finger of death, raise dead, resurrection, healing circle;* **Market price:** 28,565 gp; **Cost to Create:** 14,282 gp + 1,142 XP.

RUSK THE HUNTMASTER



Appearance: The Huntmaster towers over other humans. While he appears younger than his 62 years, his long, unkempt hair has turned silver-white, as has the rough stubble on his jaws. Even in human form, his canines are prominent in his wide mouth, and his eyes are steely gray. He rarely wears much clothing, even in cold weather, but he is never without the headband that holds his *talisman of Malar*.

Background: Rusk was born a werewolf and raised as a worshiper of all the nature gods, including brutal Malar, but also wise Silvanus, calm Eldath, and bountiful Chauntea. For years he walked as comfortably among humans as he ran with the wolves, never quite surrendering to his bestial instincts. In his teens, Rusk made a name for himself as a ranger throughout the southern Dalelands and northern Sembia. He was a free spirit, proud of his accomplishments and happiest when he could act as provider and protector for the homesteaders of the region.

For years, Rusk loved Maleva, a beautiful young cleric of Selûne. He confided in her his belief that the gods held a special fate for him. Rather than laugh at his boastful dream, Maleva shared it with him. Innocently, but foolishly, she fed his ambition with tales of the Black Wolf prophecy, a messianic heresy shared by the cults of Malar and Selûne.

Rusk became famous as a hunter of exotic beasts, and his exploits soon reached the ears of Vilsek Malveen, who hired the ranger as a guide in his trapping expeditions. The noble was not content to hunt the monsters in the wild but wanted to bring them to his home in Selgaunt, where he loosed them against other combatants in his secret baiting pit for the illicit entertainment of an elite group of fellows.

As his fame and achievements grew, Rusk developed his own followers. Their worship came between him and Maleva, who began to see that Rusk's childhood fantasy was becoming a dangerous obsession. Despite Maleva's attempts to turn him toward Selûne—or perhaps because of them—Rusk turned fully to the worship of Malar, becoming the Huntmaster of one of the violent cults of the People of the Black Blood.

Recently, Rusk received a magical sending from the son of his old employer. Stannis Malveen wanted the son of an old enemy infected with lycanthropy, and in return he would give Rusk a rare copy of the Black Wolf Scrolls, whose secrets might finally answer the doubts and hopes that have been burning within Rusk for decades. In his eagerness, Rusk botched the job, not only letting Talbot Uskevren slip through his grasp but losing his left arm in the process.

Roleplaying Notes: Beneath his gruff façade, Rusk is terrified that he is no longer—or that he never was—the chosen vessel of Malar. He dreams of becoming the Beast God's avatar or at least his champion, yet with the loss of his arm he realizes he is an imperfect instrument. The Black Wolf prophecy that once offered him hope now makes him fear that he has created the werewolf who will take his place in Malar's eyes. Jealousy and fear have made Rusk more unpredictable and dangerous than ever before.

RUSK THE HUNTMASTER

(human form; hybrid or wolf form)

Male human werewolf, 7th-level ranger, 5th-level cleric

Strength	18 (+4); 20 (+5)	Fort. Save	+14; +16
Dexterity	9 (-1); 13 (+1)	Ref. Save	+4; +6
Constitution	16 (+3); 20 (+5)	Will Save	+9; +9
Intelligence	10 (+0)	Alignment	CE
Wisdom	13 (+1)	Speed	30 ft.; 50 ft
Charisma	15 (+2)	Size	M (6 ft. 5 in.)

Hit Points	102; 126	Armor Class	15; 19
Melee Attack	+14/+9; +15/+10	Flat-footed AC	15; 18
Ranged Attack	+9/+4; +11/+6	Touch AC	13; 15

Special (human; hybrid or wolf): Track, favored enemy (beasts, humanoid—humans), rebuke undead, wolf empathy; as human plus curse of lycanthropy, damage reduction 15/silver, trip, and scent.

Skills (human; hybrid or wolf): Concentration + 13; +15, Hide -1; +2, Listen +15; +19, Move Silently +9; +11, Wilderness Lore +11; +11, Search +14; +18, Spellcraft +6; +6, Spot +15; +19.

Feats (human; hybrid or wolf): Cleave, Endurance, Great Cleave, Improved Control Shape, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack; as human plus Weapon Finesse (bite).

Ranger Spells Prepared (0/2; save DC = 11 + spell level): 1st-level—*entangle, magic fang.*

Cleric Spells Prepared (5/4+1/2+1/1+1; save DC = 11 + spell level): 0-level—*create water, detect magic* x3, *mending;* 1st-level—*bane, cure light wounds* x3, *endure elements*;* 2nd-level—*bull's strength*, resist elements, sound burst;* 3rd-level—*dominate animal*, dispel magic.*

*Domain spells. Rusk's domains are Animal and Strength.

Possessions: *Talisman of Malar* (see the New Magic Items sidebar).

STANNIS MALVEEN

Appearance: When he was human, Stannis Malveen was famous in Selgaunt for his sensuous beauty, and he was the object of desire in many a young noble's fantasy. His transformation has made him the antithesis of beauty. His skin is glossy purple-black, and he goes naked except for a vast crimson cloak and a golden chain-link veil held to his earflaps and eyebrows by multiple piercings. A short ridge forms at the crest of his skull and runs down his back, all the way to the end of his tail. His eyes look like molten gold with floating black specks. He has no legs, just a long, thick, tapering eel-like fluke. His humanoid arms are thick but powerful. His fingers end in sharp black talons.

Background: Stannis was with his mother, Velanna Malveen, the day the Selgaunt navy caught up with the notorious pirate. Defiant to the last, she perished aboard her ship, while her son fell into the sea with a dozen other hands. When a powerful grip dragged him below the surface, Stannis was certain his life was over. As it turned out, his undeath had just begun.

When the battle began, Velanna summoned an ally from the dark depths of the ocean. While the bizarre aquatic vampire came too late to aid her, he smelled her blood in the drowning Stannis and embraced him with the "gift" of undeath. Once under the thrall of the master vampire, Stannis could only obey his demand that he turn over House Malveen as tribute.

Fortunately for Stannis, Radu Malveen was waiting for them at the family mansion. Even though he was only a boy of 13, Radu slew the vampire, releasing his brother from the master's thrall.

Since then, Stannis has obeyed his brother's wishes and remained hidden within the River Hall of the condemned House Malveen. The rest of the mansion and its courtyard are used as storage for confiscated cargo, an ignoble fate that infuriates the self-imprisoned Stannis. Despite Radu's warnings never to contact their siblings, Stannis occasionally sends cryptic dreams to his youngest brother, Pietro, in an effort to "inspire" the boy's paintings. These nightmare visions are gradually driving the youngest Malveen into a deep dementia.

The controlling passion of Stannis's unlife is an abiding hatred for all of the Old Chauncel of Selgaunt, especially Thamalon Uskevren. Stannis blames the Old Owl for refusing to come to his mother's aid, no matter that Thamalon made it clear that he would have no truck with pirates. Recently, Stannis encouraged an "accident" to befall Thamalon's youngest son, Talbot. Killing the boy would be too simple a revenge, so Stannis hopes to orchestrate a punishment far worse with a little help from his old friend, the Huntmaster.

Roleplaying Notes: Even as a mortal, Stannis was an effete dandy. Years of solitude have made him even more flamboyant, a comic exaggeration of what his failing mind recalls as urbane and witty. If the consequences of displeasing him weren't so obvious, those few who meet him would have trouble smothering their own derisive laughter. The only charm he has left is the corrupt allure of undeath.

Stannis fears and ultimately obeys his younger brother, who disapproves of the vampire's schemes against the Uskevren. As much as he is able, Stannis curries Radu's favor with "gifts" of fencers kidnapped by the vampire's hideous spawn. He hopes eventually to win Radu over to his desire to hurt the Uskevren as much as they have hurt the Malveens.

STANNIS MALVEEN

Male human vampire, 7th-level sorcerer, 4th-level shadow adept

Strength	15 (+2)	Fort. Save	+7
Dexterity	9 (-1)	Ref. Save	+8
Constitution	–	Will Save	+13
Intelligence	14 (+2)	Alignment	CE
Wisdom	13 (+1)	Speed	30 ft.
Charisma	16 (+3)	Size	M (8 ft.)
Hit Points	74	Armor Class	15
Melee Attack	+7	Flat-footed AC	15
Ranged Attack	+4	Touch AC	10

Special Abilities: Shadow defense +1, shield of shadows, spell power +1, blood drain, damage reduction 15+1, domination, electricity resistance 20, energy drain, fast healing 5, spider climb, +4 turn resistance, undead.

Instead of a normal vampire's ability to assume gaseous form, Stannis transforms into a cloud of inky darkness that can move along floors or through water—but not through the air. Because his sire was a vampire from the sea, running water has no effect on Stannis.

Skills: Bluff +12, Concentration +8, Hide +12, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Listen +9, Move Silently +8, Search +10, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +12, Spot +9.

Feats: Lightning Reflexes, Insidious Magic*, Pernicious Magic*, Shadow Weave Magic*, Silent Spell, Spellcasting Prodigy*, Still Spell, Tenacious Magic*, Toughness.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/7/7/4; save DC = 14 + spell level): 0-level—*daze, detect magic, flare, ghost sound, mage hand, open/close, ray of frost, resistance, read magic*; 1st-level—*alarm, charm person, magic missile, net of shadows†, Nybor's gentle reminder†*; 2nd-level—*continual flame, darkness, Nybor's mild admonishment†, shadow mask*, summon swarm*; 3rd-level—*dispel magic, explosive runes, hold person, nondetection*; 4th-level—*armor of darkness*, Evard's black tentacles, shadow well**, 5th-level—*darkbolt*, sending*.

*These spells and feats appear in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* book.
†These spells appear in *Magic of Faerûn*.

Possessions: *Cloak of resistance +4.*

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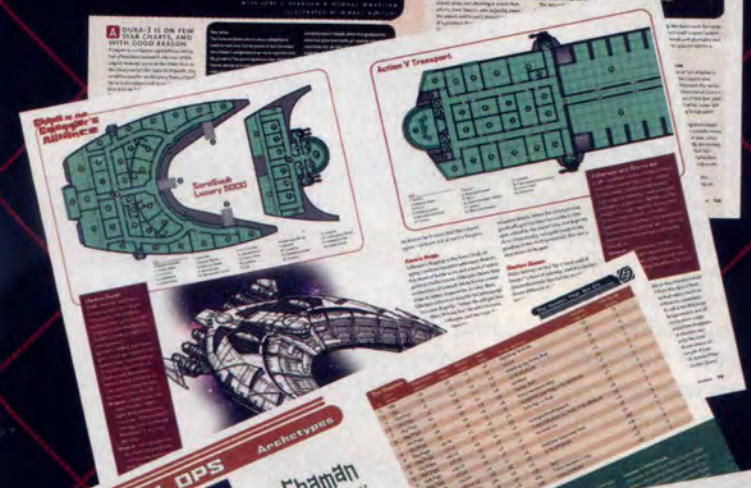

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RADU MALVEEN

Appearance: Radu is tall and exceptionally slim. He has pale skin, high cheekbones, and jet-black hair, which he ties loosely at the base of his neck. Three tiny moles form a triangle just beside his left eye, and his eyes are slightly too large for his face, the irises so black that they are indistinguishable from his pupils. His features are otherwise perfect, almost as if they had been crafted in porcelain. He wears expensive but not particularly fancy clothing, and he is never seen without a plain, slim longsword at his hip.

Background: Radu was peculiar even as a child. He held himself apart from the other children, seeming to take pleasure in none of their games. Only sword practice kept his interest, and he became the youngest student of the acclaimed Master Ferrick at the age of seven. By ten, he could easily defeat all but the most proficient swordsmen.

Radu was thirteen years old when news of his mother's demise reached him. City officials came to take him and his siblings from their ancestral home. While the others went quietly, grateful for the mercy, Radu slipped back into the house each night, spending hours in quiet reflection by the grand pools of the River Hall. It was there that he met the transformed Stannis and his vampiric master. The hideous monster expected to bring another Malveen boy under his thrall. He was surprised, to say the least, at Radu's inventive resistance.

After freeing his brother from the master vampire, Radu swore he would return the Malveen family to its former station and demanded Stannis's help. At first, Radu expected his brother would work at his side, but his increasingly monstrous appearance and capricious behavior made Stannis a liability. Within a year, Radu forbade Stannis to leave the house, except to hunt in Selgaunt Bay. Despite his own power, Stannis obeyed his younger brother's wishes.

Since then, Radu has been the primary source of the Malveen family's financial recovery. Unknown to his eldest brother, Laskar, Radu has been supplementing the family's import business with illicit dealings ranging from smuggling to slavery. Careful to remain two or three steps removed from the most heinous deeds, Radu nonetheless orchestrates the crimes and launders the proceeds. His one professional indulgence is assassination, which he performs anonymously for great sums. More dangerous is his weakness for duels to the death, which he considers the only true test of fighting skill. Despite the danger of discovery, he allows Stannis to present him with captives who have a reputation for fencing skill. These unfortunates meet their fate in the secret baiting pit beneath House Malveen.

Roleplaying Notes: Radu has no social graces. While he is never overtly rude, he is aloof and superior. While many of his cohorts admire his appearance, skill, and poise, he has no friends, no lovers, no public interests—only his family.

In his own way, Radu loves his family and does what he does only to restore their prestige and fortune. He considers himself and his horrid brother Stannis expendable resources in pursuit of the cause. Still, he has had many chances and excuses to destroy his vampire sibling, and he has thus far declined. Should Stannis ever threaten the safety of the rest of the Malveen family, however . . .

RADU MALVEEN

Male human, 11th-level fighter

Strength	13 (+1)	Fort. Save	+8
Dexterity	17 (+3)	Ref. Save	+6
Constitution	12 (+1)	Will Save	+4
Intelligence	13 (+1)	Alignment	NE
Wisdom	12 (+1)	Speed	30 ft.
Charisma	11 (+0)	Size	M (5 ft. 11 in.)

Hit Points	70	Armor Class	15
Melee Attack	+12/+7/+2	Flat-footed AC	12
Ranged Attack	+14/+9/+4	Touch AC	15

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +8, Jump +11, Move Silently +8, Ride +13, Swim +7.

Feats: Ambidexterity, Blind-Fight, Expertise, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Twin Sword Style*, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse (longsword), Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).
*This feat appears in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* book.

Possessions: *Ring of protection +2*, *bone blade* (see the New Magic Items sidebar), masterwork longsword.

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THE SHUNNED STREET

BY ED GREENWOOD · ILLUSTRATED BY DAVID DAY

Long before they began establishing trading enclaves outside of Thay, the Red Wizards maintained a web of undercover agents throughout Faerûn. Such local eyes and ears aided the Thayans by assisting with their slaving operations, finding and seizing powerful magic, and gathering information. They still do.

Although open trading enclaves ultimately proved more effective, the Red Wizards initially used these agents to establish hidden locations in many cities. Secretly, they meet, work shady deeds, and store goods and currency. The alley in the Sembian port Urmlaspyr known as "The Shunned Street" exemplifies these hidden Thayan safe houses. Despite the recent establishment of open enclaves, these safe houses still exist.

The Red Wizards hide their safe houses in plain sight. Many are stables and other utilitarian buildings, a few are ruins, some are warehouses, and a surprising number are alleys like The Shunned Street.

To establish such a place, the Red Wizards find an alley or lightly used street lined with buildings—one that has a bend or two in it. They purchase the buildings adjacent to the bend, eliminating or driving out owners who refuse to sell.

One building has a well-oiled, extra-wide door (that opens inward, away from the alley) in its back wall. This door is usually locked and concealed from prying eyes by an *illusory wall*. The door opens into a long, shallow room that runs along the back of a warehouse. This room is separated from the rest of the building's interior by a solid wall. The left-hand end of this area is for storing captives (a crate equipped with gags and manacles is chained to the wall), and its central expanse is for storing contraband and supplies.

A support pillar in this secret room sports a concealed drawer that holds a small cache of items. The cache includes three *potions of cure moderate wounds* and arcane scrolls of *magic missile, obscuring mist, rope trick, screen,* and *wall of stone.*

A few paces to the right of the pillar stand two 5-foot-tall stout wooden crates, firmly bolted shut (but not locked). They contain undead—skeletons that will attack anyone opening the crates.

Medium Skeletons (8): hp 6 each; *Monster Manual* page 165.

Beyond the crates, the right-hand end of the room terminates in what looks like a filthy, cobweb-shrouded stone wall. In truth, it's another *illusory wall.*

Behind the *illusory wall* is the true right-hand end of the secret room. Its wall sports a portal that allows access to Thardaunleiyar, a citadel in the Thayan countryside. Thardaunleiyar is typical of such portal keeps. It's co-owned by several Zulkirs and staffed by crossbow-armed guards, low-ranking wizards, and caged monsters. These defenders are ready to battle invaders who might appear through the portal. Their main function is to aid traveling Red Wizards.

The active area of the portal is 1 foot deep and looks much like a normal open doorway. This is a two-way portal, requiring no key to operate from the Thayan side, but operating from the Sembian side only for persons who hold or carry a piece of green glass (there's a tiny pile of green glass shards in the corner at the other end of the wall where the portal stands).

The building on the other side of the alley also has an alley-access door concealed by an *illusory wall.* This one isn't locked and opens into a 10-foot-square cubicle with another door in its back wall.

The door frame of the first, outer door contains several rust-hued (but not really rusted) metal door stops in the shape of stylized spiders, with a long, flexible chain joining each to a second spider.

Such objects are common in Calimshan, Tharsult, and other Shining Sea areas, and they are becoming increasingly popular in ports everywhere. They're used to prop open

doors for loading and unloading, the varying "widths" between legs used to catch a door-edge between them, or jammed into the hinge angle of an open door to keep it open. A single person can take a door-spider away (allowing a door to slam shut) by kicking or pulling at its second spider. Double doors can be propped open with a pair of these. Rather than carefully stepping over the chain stretched between, the last person through drags a foot to catch the chain and drag both spiders away from the doors; doors constructed with weights so that they'll swing closed unless held open by some means are common in the warmer, more insect-infested realms.

These door-spiders have been enchanted into animated constructs that obey the commands of any Red Wizard.

Animated Door Spiders (Tiny animated object) (6): hp 2 each; *Monster Manual* page 17.

The second door, at the back of the cubicle, is false (the wall is solid), as is the floor of the cubicle (it's another *illusory wall*, covering the open top of a 10-foot-square, 60-foot-deep spiked pit trap).

Illusion over Spiked Pit Trap (60 ft. Deep): CR 4; no attack roll necessary (6d6), +10 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4+5 points of damage per successful hit); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

A pace farther along the alley from the illusion-hidden door (in the back alley wall of the same building) is a quite visible, broken door that opens into a wall, where a former opening into rooms beyond has been bricked-over.

The door, although made to look broken, is actually made of very stout metal. The door is fashioned so that it seems stuck to the wall, and opening it is difficult. Releasing the door requires a successful Search check (DC 20) followed by a successful Disable Device check (DC 20). The door can be simply forced open with a successful Strength check (DC 30). The door is actually a false door, and once opened it reveals a powerful magical trap. The wall behind the false door bears a carefully inscribed *symbol* of death. The symbol is triggered whenever anyone opens the door and reads it.

***Symbol* (death) Trap:** CR 10; death to 150 hit points worth of creatures; Fortitude save (DC 22) negates; Search (DC 33); Disable Device (DC 33).

The Shunned Street has a final defense—a network of *arcane mark wards*. In their dealings with others in the city, the Red Wizards always attempt to place an object marked with an *arcane mark* into the hands of those they're dealing with. Items from Red Wizard trading enclaves are so marked, as are most of a Red Wizard's personal belongings. The Thayans are firmly dedicated to getting marked objects into the hands of their foes. So much so that they will often sell such items for less than they are worth.

All Red Wizards in the city are required to maintain an *arcane mark ward* in or near the Shunned Street. This network of wards at least partially ensures that the Thayans are apprised of the movements of powerful individuals near the alley. Any time a marked object or person gets too close to the Shunned Street, one of the Thayan wizards in the city alerts his fellows of the intrusion. The mages maintain the arcane foci necessary to cast *scrying* on those who have brought their marked objects too close to the hidden alley.

Between the Thayans dedicated distribution of objects bearing *arcane marks*, the *arcane mark wards*, and diligent use of *scrying*, the Red Wizards are rarely surprised in their hideout.

ARCANE MARK WARD

Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)
Area: 25-ft. radius emanation centered on a point in space
Duration: 1 day/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

A sophisticated and long-lasting version of the *alarm* spell, *arcane mark ward* responds only to objects or creatures bearing the caster's *arcane mark*.

As long as he remains within one mile of the warded area, the caster is alerted each time a creature or object bearing his *arcane mark* enters or leaves the area. In all other respects, this alert functions exactly like the mental alarm version of the *alarm* spell.

Marked Ethereal or Astral creatures and objects do not trigger the *arcane mark ward* unless they become material while in the warded area.

ELMINSTER'S NOTES

Know ye that this particular street gained its name among beggars and street thieves first, undoubtedly because of the high probability that folk sleeping or lurking in it often disappear.

It represents the most basic of the Red Wizards' covert rendezvous points (little more than portal defenses, in truth); many I've seen are far more elaborate than this one. Yet the simpler and lower-profile installations seemed to work the best; others allowed their Red Wizard users to indulge their love of nasty traps and grand defenses, but these were inevitably discovered and disposed of. Passing unnoticed is always the best armor. I've heard of angered local thieves driving Red Wizards out of alleys like the Shunned Street by firing crossbows from one direction while sending burning carts crashing into the alley from the other direction. If the Thayans retreat into their hidden warehouse rather than giving battle, the thieves stop the carts by the illusion-concealed doors, smoking the Red Wizards out of hiding. Once the Thayans retreat through their portal, the thieves hastily strip the area of valuables and flee, leaving traps behind.

For obvious personal reasons, I cannot endorse the general populace's low opinion of wizards, but in the case of the Red Wizards, I understand the feeling all too well.

When I discover one of these secret areas, I switch the portal to a more appropriate destination (like ten or more feet above the poisoned blades of their own pit trap, for example). Life should be rich in such simple amusements.

Red Wizards know which natural wall markings denote spell area of effect borders or nearby features (such as keys buried directly beneath stains).
DAY
102 november 2001

THE SHUNNED STREET
Cobblestones different in hue from others surrounding them may mark the locations of hiding places beneath or the perimeter of Thayan spell effects.
Many alleys chosen by Red Wizards have (or are given) wheel-breaking bumps or jagged rocks near their mouths to discourage travel or wagon-parking.

CUP & CHALICE

BY OWEN K. C. STEPHENS
ILLUSTRATED BY BOB KLASNICH

From simple clay jars and leather cups to elaborate chalices inlaid with gold and gems, every society develops a number of drinking vessels. Some are simple bowls designed to hold a drink at dinner, while others are ornate status symbols and important parts of social and religious ceremonies. Most cities are so full of humble flagons and mugs that no one gives them a second thought. Many adventurers and nobles have a simple wooden cup they carry to have a clean drinking vessel wherever they go, but some of those containers might not be as simple as they seem. With a little magic, even the most common of household items can become objects of great value.

Alchemist's Glass

An *alchemist's glass* is a beaker usually constructed of green or blue glass with several small spouts near the bottom. Arcane writing frequently covers the sides of the *glass* and sometimes includes the command words required to use the *glass* to its full potential.

Whenever the *glass* is filled with fluids, powders, or leaves, it mixes them together evenly. This occurs even if the materials in question normally don't mix, such as oil and water (although in this case the fluids separate normally as soon as they leave the *glass*). Infusions and teas can be made in a single round if placed within the *glass*.

Additionally, each *alchemist's glass* has two command words associated with it. The first command word causes the glass to break down any liquid or potion it contains into its component parts. This effect immediately destroys a potion but also reveals what ingredients were used in the potion's creation. This command also removes the salt from seawater, separates poisons from any liquids they're mixed with, and is sometimes used to check the purity of fresh water.

The second command word causes separated materials to pour from the bottom of the *glass*, each from a different spout. This can be helpful when identifying unusual ingredients or when trying to purify a potable liquid.

If there are more components than spouts, as many components as possible drain out. When the second command word is spoken again, another round of components pours from the spouts. The second command word can be used repeatedly until all of the components have been separated.

Caster Level: 3rd; **Prerequisites:** Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, *detect poison, purify food and drink;* **Market Price:** 1,800 gp; **Cost to Create:** 900 gp + 72 XP.

Bardic Cup

A *bardic cup*, sometimes known as a goblet of song, is a finely crafted and valuable silver drinking vessel. The bowl of each cup is adorned with small gems, and the stem is molded into the form of four figures—one cloaked figure carrying a dagger, one holding a staff, one holding a skull, and one bearing a harp.

Whenever liquid is poured into a *bardic cup*, one or more of the figures might sing. If the liquid is poisonous, diseased, or foul, the skull face softly sings a mournful dirge. If the liquid has healing properties, the figure with a harp plays a bright ballad. If a magic liquid is placed in the chalice, the figure with the staff sings a deep rhythmic chant. If the liquid is cursed or inherently evil, the

figure with cloak and dagger whispers a lament.

If a liquid qualifies as more than one of these, all appropriate figures sing in harmony. Thus a magic healing potion poured into the *cup* causes both the staff-bearing and harp-carrying figures to sing. *Bardic cups* are often used by adventuring minstrels to partially identify potions and fresh water or to test drinks for poison without offending a host.

Caster Level: 3rd; **Prerequisites:** Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, *detect evil, detect magic, detect poison, purify food and drink;* **Market Price:** 6,500 gp; **Cost to Create:** 3,250 gp + 260 XP.

Dwarven Rune Stein

Dwarven rune steins are squat and heavy mugs of iron engraved with images of dragons, bears, axes, and dwarven runes. The *steins* are shorter and wider than most human drinking vessels, with handles molded to fit a dwarf's sturdy grip. The runes are an ancient form of dwarven writing, each describing a specific trait venerated by dwarves.

The user of the *stein* can invoke a rune to transform any liquid contained within and then drink it to gain magical benefits. The transformed liquid works only for the person who invoked the rune, and the liquid must be imbibed in the same round the rune is invoked or the liquid has no effect. Invoking the rune and drinking the liquid is a full-round action. The runes fade away once used and cannot be used again.

Bravery Rune: Liquid transformed by this rune grants the rune invoker resistance to fear. This functions as the *remove fear* spell.

Endurance Rune: This rune causes the liquid within the *stein* to have the same effects as a *potion of endurance.*

Fortitude Rune: This rune causes the liquid within the *stein* to have the same effects as a *potion of aid.*

Heroism Rune: This rune causes the liquid within the *stein* to have the same effects as a *potion of heroism.*

Honesty Rune: Liquid transformed by this rune grants the rune invoker an aura of honesty. This functions as the *zone of truth* spell cast by an 8th-level cleric centered on the rune invoker.

Luck Rune: By imbibing this liquid, the invoker gains incredible luck. For an hour the drinker gains a +1 luck bonus to all saving throws. In addition, the drinker may reroll one roll that she has just made. She must take the second result. This extraordinary ability is usable once during the hour that the luck bonus lasts.

Mettle Rune: This rune grants the drinker a +4 natural armor bonus for 1 hour.

Skill Rune: Invoking this rune and drinking from the *stein* grants a +3 competence bonus to any Craft skill checks. This magical benefit lasts one week.

Strength Rune: This rune causes the liquid within the *stein* to have the same effects as a *potion of bull's strength.*

Sturdiness Rune: The sturdiness rune grants the drinker a +10 competence bonus to Balance skill checks and a +10 competence bonus to Strength checks to resist bull rush attacks for 1 hour.

Caster Level: 8th; **Prerequisites:** Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item; **Market Price:** 3,300 gp; **Cost to Create:** 1,650 gp + 132 XP.

Caine's Flagons of Shadows

Only eight of these magic drinking vessels are believed to have been made by the shadow sorcerer Caine before he mysteriously disappeared. Each *flagon* appears to be made of black wood intricately carved with strange fluid patterns and cloaked figures. Despite its appearance, a *flagon of shadows* weighs as much as an iron stein of the same size. *Flagons of shadows* are always cool to the touch and never cast shadows themselves.

Each *flagon* has a command word carved onto its bottom. Most of these are not recorded anywhere, but it is known that "makareem" is one of them.

Fives times a day, a *flagon of shadows* can be filled with liquid and the command word spoken, turning the liquid into liquid shadow. If left in the flagon, the liquid shadow lasts 10 rounds before evaporating.

The liquid shadow can be poured on the ground, in which case it creates a 20-foot radius sphere of darkness like the *darkness* spell as though cast by a 2nd-level caster.

Additionally, the liquid shadow can be imbibed. The imbiber adds +2 to the

DC of his Illusion (shadow) spells. This effect lasts for 3 hours.

Caster Level: 3rd; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, Spell Focus (Illusion), *darkness;* **Market Price:** 21,600 gp; **Cost to Create:** 10,800 gp + 864 XP.

Chalice of True Seeing

These unusual items always appear to be dented, scratched, and tarnished goblets of little value. But this appearance is an illusion to conceal the *chalice's* true form of valuable inlaid gold studded with precious gems. In its true appearance, a *chalice of true seeing* is always constructed of materials worth at least 2,000 gp. All of these *chalices* have command words engraved on them, usually on the bottom.

When the command word is spoken, the *chalice* fills with a thick, rose-red syrup. This can be done once a day. Anyone drinking the sweet syrup gains *true seeing* as per the spell cast by a 10th-level caster. The syrup loses its magical properties if it is removed from the *chalice* before it is consumed, and all of the syrup must be drunk by a single individual for the *true seeing* effect to function.

Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *true seeing;* **Market Price:** 21,600 gp; **Cost to Create:** 10,800 gp + 864 XP.

Dragon's Goblet

A *dragon's goblet* is a rare and sometimes dangerous magic item that can be both harmful and useful to adventurers. The *goblet* is a cunningly sculpted figurine of a mighty winged lizard clutching a bowl in its mouth. Usually the goblet is made of gold or silver, but a few are carved from gems.

Whenever a *dragon's goblet* is filled with liquid, the *goblet* transforms it into a burning fluid like alchemist's fire. This fluid can be poured out to start a fire or hurled at a creature as a grenadelike weapon with a range of 10 feet and no range increment. The brave can drink the burning liquid in an attempt to produce more spectacular effects.

Once per hour, the burning fluid can be drunk without harm and provide one of two effects. The drinker can either breathe forth gouts of flame or contain the fire within. That decision must be made immediately after the liquid is imbibed.

If the drinker decides to breathe flame, the imbibed liquid functions exactly like a *potion of fire breath.*

If the drinker decides to contain the fire within, the drinker gains *protection from elements (cold)* as though cast by a 10th-level caster.

If the burning fluid is imbibed when it is not safe (less than an hour since the last time it was safely imbibed) the drinker must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20). Failure indicates that the imbiber suffers 4d6 points of fire damage. Success indicates the drinker takes half damage.

Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *protection from elements;* **Market Price:** 72,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 36,000 gp + 2,880 XP.

Rose of Kings

A *rose of kings* is an ornately sculpted chalice of copper or, rarely, wood in the form of a beautiful rose. The twelve petals of the flower make up the bowl, and the stalk of the rose is the stem of the vessel, which bears a single thorn. Most of these items are in the hands of kings and high priests, who often use them to interview potential advisors and allies.

If the bowl of the *rose of kings* is filled with wine, the single thorn begins to glow with a dull green radiance. Anyone touching the thorn suffers 1 point of damage. Each time the thorn is touched, one petal of the *rose* also glows.

If creatures who have been pricked by the thorn drink from the *rose,* they become unable to lie to each other for 1 hour. All those who drink from the cup immediately become aware of its properties. They can freely lie to individuals who have not drunk from the *rose* but are temporarily prevented from telling even the slightest falsehood to their fellow drinkers. Creatures affected by the *rose* are not compelled to speak.

Caster Level: 3rd; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *zone of truth;* **Market Price:** 10,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 5,000 gp + 400 XP.

Spy Glass

A *spy glass* appears to be a small, 1-ounce tumbler of delicate crystal or quartz with a gold-edged rim. Despite

its fragile appearance, a *spy glass* is actually as strong as steel. Designed as a tool of espionage, attempts to detect the magic of a *spy glass* are interfered with as though *Nystul's undetectable aura* has been cast upon it.

The powers of a *spy glass* do not become apparent until the *glass* is placed against a wall. When this is done, the *glass* acts as a simple scrying device, allowing anyone who looks through the *glass* to see through the wall. This power functions only when the *glass* is placed against a wall. It cannot be used to look through floors, tables, ceilings, trees, or anything other than a constructed or carved wall. Because of the ease with which such an item can be misused, *spy glasses* are outlawed in some kingdoms.

Caster Level: 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *clairaudience/clairvoyance;* **Market Price:** 16,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 8,000 gp + 3,200 XP.

Talking Cups

Talking cups usually come in sets of two, occasionally in sets of four, and rarely sets of eight. The *cups* are all simple wooden drinking cups, much like those common to taverns and inns. All the *cups* in a set are marked by a simple sigil on the bottom.

The magic of *talking cups* is obvious only if all the *cups* in a set are filled to their brims with the same liquid. In the case of water, the source of the water is irrelevant, but if milk is used, the *cups* must all be filled with milk from the same animal. If ale or wine is used, the *cups* must all be filled from liquid taken from the same barrel or bottle. When this is done, any noise made within 5 feet of a filled *cup* is repeated at the same volume by all of the other filled *cups.* Verbal spell effects, command words, and sonic and other sound-based attacks have no effect when transmitted by a *talking cup.*

Talking cups are most often used as a means of communication by friends separated for long periods of time. It is also possible for a spy to use a *talking cup* to listen in on conversations he is not present for, but this can prove difficult since the *cups* stop functioning if any of the liquid is removed from one of the *cups,* and any noise made near the spy is repeated by the *cup* near the area he is listening to.

Caster Level: 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *clairaudience/clairvoyance;* **Market Price (for a set of two cups):** 20,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 10,000 gp + 800 XP.

Vampiric Goblet

A *vampiric goblet* always appears to be a finely crafted chalice of precious metal, usually platinum or gold. Twenty-four clear crystals are set around the bowl of the *goblet* with a rune of a dagger etched above each.

The runic daggers in the *goblet* can be made to glow using a command word, which is never written anywhere on the *goblet.* Anyone who drinks from a *vampiric goblet* without speaking the command word takes 1 point of damage. Each hit point stolen by the *goblet* causes one crystal to turn ruby red. Once all twenty-four crystals are red, the goblet stops draining hit points.

If a second command word is spoken right before drinking, one of the crystals glows red, and the person sipping from the goblet regains 1 hit point of damage and the red crystal becomes clear once more. If the drinker is uninjured, the hit point is lost.

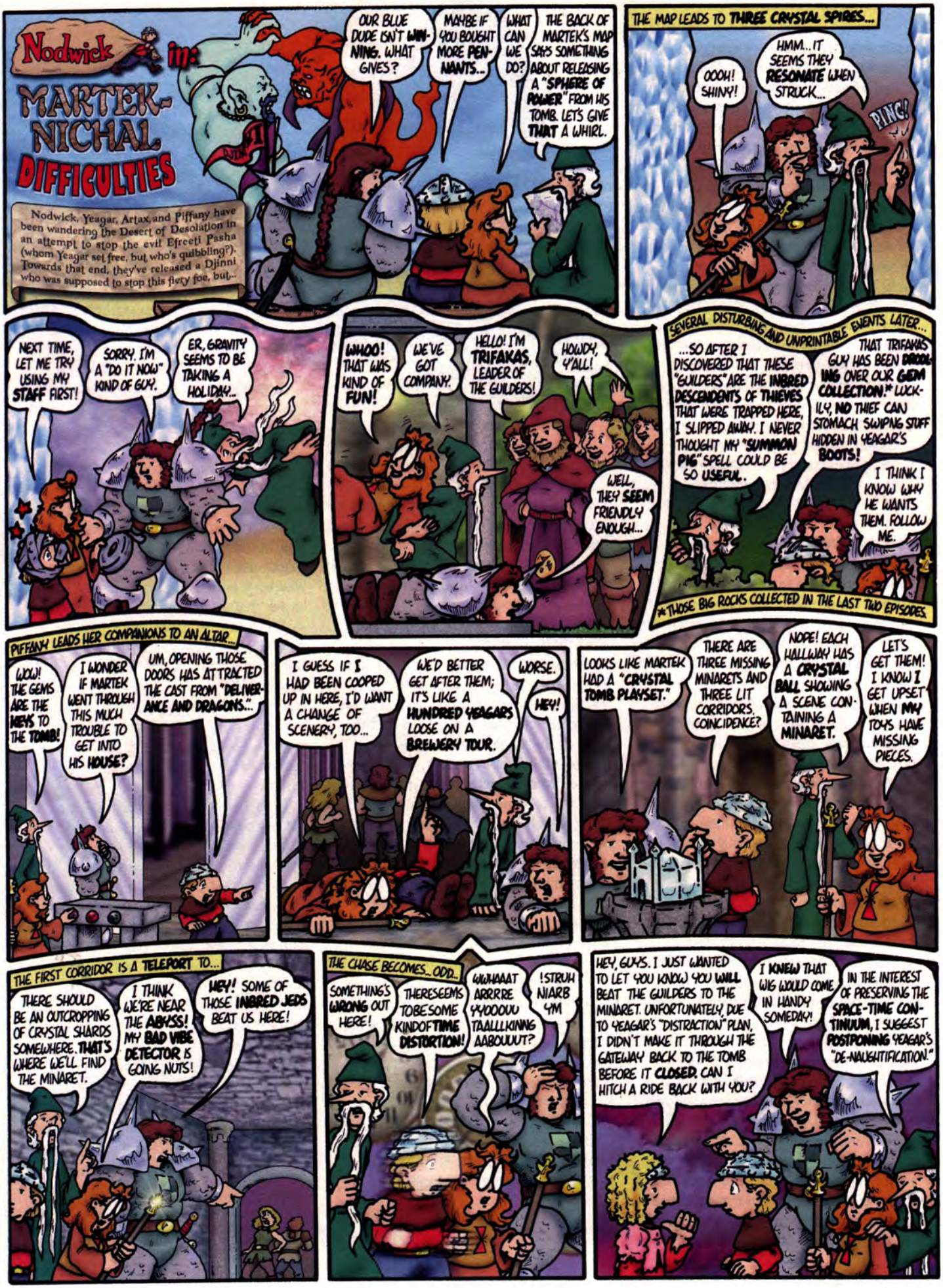
Caster Level: 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *cure moderate wounds;* **Market Price:** 8,100 gp; **Cost to Create:** 4,050 gp + 324 XP.

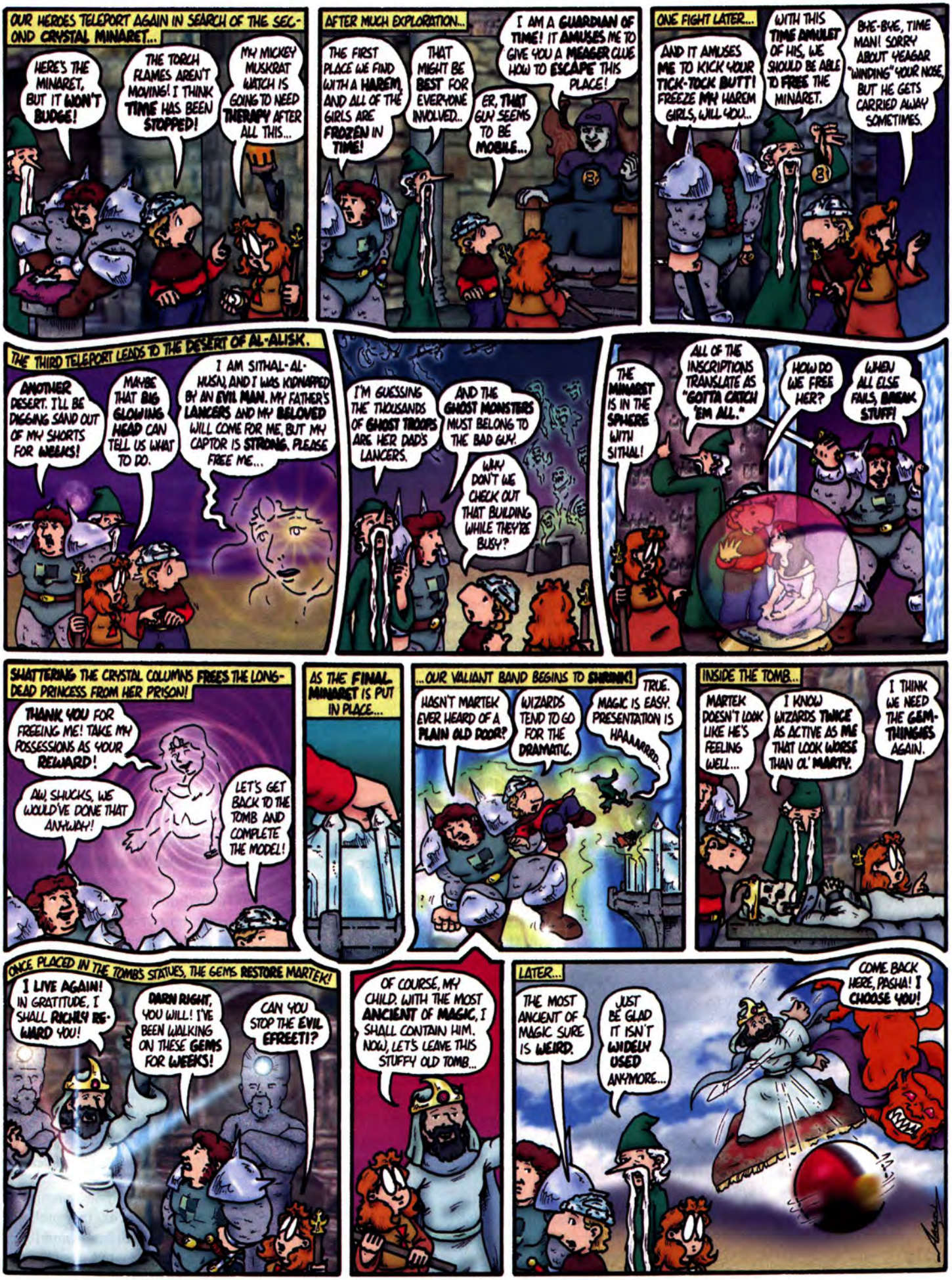
War Mug of the Ogre Magi

This unusual item is a tall and heavy flagon usually of steel or bronze. It weighs 5 pounds and is designed for a larger than human-sized hand. A quart of liquid can be poured into the *war mug* without quite reaching its brim. But even if the *war mug* is filled to capacity, its magical properties prevent any material from accidentally spilling out of it, no matter how much the *mug* is jostled, moved, or tipped. Drinks remain safely within the vessel unless lips touch its rim.

The true magic of a *war mug* does not become obvious until it is used to strike someone. The *mug* is then revealed to be a simple weapon of some potency, striking for 1d6+2 points of damage. The *mug* also provides a +2 enhancement bonus to attacks made with it. All damage done by the *war mug* is subdual damage. The *mug* is a favored weapon in barroom brawls, allowing its wielder to knock out opponents without worrying about killing them—or spilling his drink.

Caster Level: 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, *greater magic weapon;* **Market Price:** 8,315 gp; **Cost to Create:** 4,158 gp + 333 XP.


Nodwick in:
MARTEK-NICHAL DIFFICULTIES
Nodwick, Yeagar, Artax and Piffany have been wandering the Desert of Desolation in an attempt to stop the evil Efreeti Pasha (whom Yeagar set free, but who's quibbling?). Towards that end, they've released a Djinni who was supposed to stop this fiery foe, but...
OUR BLUE DUDE ISN'T WINNING. WHAT GIVES?
MAYBE IF YOU BOUGHT MORE PENNANTS...
WHAT CAN WE DO?
THE BACK OF MARTEK'S MAP SAYS SOMETHING ABOUT RELEASING A "SPHERE OF POWER" FROM HIS TOMB. LET'S GIVE THAT A WHIRL.
THE MAP LEADS TO THREE CRYSTAL SPIRES...
OOOH! SHINY!
HMM... IT SEEMS THEY RESONATE WHEN STRUCK...
PING!
NEXT TIME, LET ME TRY USING MY STAFF FIRST!
SORRY. I'M A "DO IT NOW" KIND OF GUY.
ER, GRAVITY SEEMS TO BE TAKING A HOLIDAY...
WHOO! THAT WAS KIND OF FUN!
WE'VE GOT COMPANY.
HELLO! I'M TRIFAKAS, LEADER OF THE GUILDERS!
HOWDY, Y'ALL!
WELL, THEY SEEM FRIENDLY ENOUGH...
SEVERAL DISTURBING AND UNPRINTABLE EVENTS LATER...
...SO AFTER I DISCOVERED THAT THESE "GUILDERS" ARE THE INBRED DESCENDENTS OF THIEVES THAT WERE TRAPPED HERE, I SLIPPED AWAY. I NEVER THOUGHT MY "SUMMON PIG" SPELL COULD BE SO USEFUL.
THAT TRIFAKAS GUY HAS BEEN DROOLING OVER OUR GEM COLLECTION.* LUCKILY, NO THIEF CAN STOMACH SWIPING STUFF HIDDEN IN YEAGAR'S BOOTS!
I THINK I KNOW WHY HE WANTS THEM. FOLLOW ME.
*THOSE BIG ROCKS COLLECTED IN THE LAST TWO EPISODES.
PIFFANY LEADS HER COMPANIONS TO AN ALTAR...
WOW! THE GEMS ARE THE KEYS TO THE TOMB!
I WONDER IF MARTEK WENT THROUGH THIS MUCH TROUBLE TO GET INTO HIS HOUSE?
UM, OPENING THOSE DOORS HAS ATTRACTED THE CAST FROM "DELIVERANCE AND DRAGONS"...
I GUESS IF I HAD BEEN COOPED UP IN HERE, I'D WANT A CHANGE OF SCENERY, TOO...
WE'D BETTER GET AFTER THEM; IT'S LIKE A HUNDRED YEAGARS LOOSE ON A BREWERY TOUR.
WORSE.
HEY!
LOOKS LIKE MARTEK HAD A "CRYSTAL TOMB PLAYSET."
THERE ARE THREE MISSING MINARETS AND THREE LIT CORRIDORS. COINCIDENCE?
NOPE! EACH HALLWAY HAS A CRYSTAL BALL SHOWING A SCENE CONTAINING A MINARET.
LET'S GET THEM! I KNOW I GET UPSET WHEN MY TOYS HAVE MISSING PIECES.
THE FIRST CORRIDOR IS A TELEPORT TO...
THERE SHOULD BE AN OUTCROPPING OF CRYSTAL SHARDS SOMEWHERE. THAT'S WHERE WE'LL FIND THE MINARET.
I THINK WE'RE NEAR THE ABYSS! MY BAD VIBE DETECTOR IS GOING NUTS!
HEY! SOME OF THOSE INBRED JEDS BEAT US HERE!
THE CHASE BECOMES... ODD...
SOMETHING'S WRONG OUT HERE!
THERESEEMS TOBESOME KINDOFTIME DISTORTION!
WWHAAAT ARRRRE YYOOOUU TAALLLKIANG AABOUUUT?
!STRUH NIARB YM
HEY, GUYS. I JUST WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW YOU WILL BEAT THE GUILDERS TO THE MINARET. UNFORTUNATELY, DUE TO YEAGAR'S "DISTRACTION" PLAN, I DIDN'T MAKE IT THROUGH THE GATEWAY BACK TO THE TOMB BEFORE IT CLOSED. CAN I HITCH A RIDE BACK WITH YOU?
I KNEW THAT WIG WOULD COME IN HANDY SOMEDAY!
IN THE INTEREST OF PRESERVING THE SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM, I SUGGEST POSTPONING YEAGAR'S "DE-NAUGHTIFICATION."


OUR HEROES TELEPORT AGAIN IN SEARCH OF THE SECOND CRYSTAL MINARET...
HERE'S THE MINARET, BUT IT WON'T BUDGE!
THE TORCH FLAMES AREN'T MOVING! I THINK TIME HAS BEEN STOPPED!
MY MICKEY MUSKRAT WATCH IS GOING TO NEED THERAPY AFTER ALL THIS...
AFTER MUCH EXPLORATION...
THE FIRST PLACE WE FIND WITH A HAREM, AND ALL OF THE GIRLS ARE FROZEN IN TIME!
THAT MIGHT BE BEST FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED...
ER, THAT GUY SEEMS TO BE MOBILE...
I AM A GUARDIAN OF TIME! IT AMUSES ME TO GIVE YOU A MEAGER CLUE HOW TO ESCAPE THIS PLACE!
ONE FIGHT LATER...
AND IT AMUSES ME TO KICK YOUR TICK-TOCK BUTT! FREEZE MY HAREM GIRLS, WILL YOU...
WITH THIS TIME AMULET OF HIS, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO FREE THE MINARET.
BYE-BYE, TIME MAN! SORRY ABOUT YEAGAR "WINDING" YOUR NOSE, BUT HE GETS CARRIED AWAY SOMETIMES.
THE THIRD TELEPORT LEADS TO THE DESERT OF AL-ALISK.
ANOTHER DESERT. I'LL BE DIGGING SAND OUT OF MY SHORTS FOR WEEKS!
MAYBE THAT BIG GLOWING HEAD CAN TELL US WHAT TO DO.
I AM SITHAL-AL-HUSN, AND I WAS KIDNAPPED BY AN EVIL MAN. MY FATHER'S LANCERS AND MY BELOVED WILL COME FOR ME, BUT MY CAPTOR IS STRONG. PLEASE FREE ME...
I'M GUESSING THE THOUSANDS OF GHOST TROOPS ARE HER DAD'S LANCERS.
AND THE GHOST MONSTERS MUST BELONG TO THE BAD GUY.
WHY DON'T WE CHECK OUT THAT BUILDING WHILE THEY'RE BUSY?
THE MINARET IS IN THE SPHERE WITH SITHAL!
ALL OF THE INSCRIPTIONS TRANSLATE AS "GOTTA CATCH 'EM ALL."
HOW DO WE FREE HER?
WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS, BREAK STUFF!
SHATTERING THE CRYSTAL COLUMNS FREES THE LONG-DEAD PRINCESS FROM HER PRISON!
THANK YOU FOR FREEING ME! TAKE MY POSSESSIONS AS YOUR REWARD!
AW, SHUCKS, WE WOULD'VE DONE THAT ANYWAY!
LET'S GET BACK TO THE TOMB AND COMPLETE THE MODEL!
AS THE FINAL MINARET IS PUT IN PLACE...
...OUR VALIANT BAND BEGINS TO SHRINK!
HASN'T MARTEK EVER HEARD OF A PLAIN OLD DOOR?
WIZARDS TEND TO GO FOR THE DRAMATIC.
TRUE. MAGIC IS EASY. PRESENTATION IS HAAAARRRD.
INSIDE THE TOMB...
MARTEK DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE'S FEELING WELL...
I KNOW WIZARDS TWICE AS ACTIVE AS ME THAT LOOK WORSE THAN OL' MARTY.
I THINK WE NEED THE GEM-THINGIES AGAIN.
ONCE PLACED IN THE TOMB'S STATUES, THE GEMS RESTORE MARTEK!
I LIVE AGAIN! IN GRATITUDE, I SHALL RICHLY REWARD YOU!
DARN RIGHT, YOU WILL! I'VE BEEN WALKING ON THESE GEMS FOR WEEKS!
CAN YOU STOP THE EVIL EFREET!?
OF COURSE, MY CHILD. WITH THE MOST ANCIENT OF MAGIC, I SHALL CONTAIN HIM. NOW, LET'S LEAVE THIS STUFFY OLD TOMB...
LATER...
THE MOST ANCIENT OF MAGIC SURE IS WEIRD.
JUST BE GLAD IT ISN'T WIDELY USED ANYMORE...
COME BACK HERE, PASHA! I CHOOSE YOU!

by Chris Pramas

The Gnolls of Naresh

Naresh is a dagger pointed at the heart of Ravilla (see *Dragon* #285). Although gnoll tribes overran the area several hundred years ago, Naresh is reckoned a new threat by the Oligarchs of Ravilla. In fact, the driving force of the gnoll armies is an ancient foe of elvenkind, Yeenoghu, a demon prince of the Abyss.

The Demon War

As discussed in issue #285, the defining event of Western Oerik was a conflict known as the Demon War. The architects of this invasion were the aforementioned Yeenoghu and his then ally, Baphomet, demon lord of minotaurs. Their armies were comprised of demons, gnolls, and minotaurs—all straight from the Abyss.

When the abyssal armies were finally defeated, surviving demons fled back through the portals, which were sealed behind them. The smashed remnants of the gnoll forces fled across the mountains and disappeared. The gray elves, soon to establish their new city-states around the Abyssal Gateways, thought the gnolls were gone for good.

They were wrong. . . .

Rebirth

The days after the Demon War were dark ones for the gnolls. Yeenoghu and Baphomet became enemies, each blaming the other for their defeat. As if fleeing from vengeful elves was not enough, the gnolls also found themselves in constant skirmishes with their minotaur allies. Crossing the mountains with few supplies and no native guides only added to their misery. As a result, many of the gnolls perished before they ever reached safety beyond the mountains.

The gnolls arrived in a lawless region well away from civilization. Yet even with reduced numbers, the veteran gnoll warriors were able to claim a section of the forest as a new base. Once established, they sent out rangers to survey the area. They discovered that several humanoid warlords were operating in the wild and that a strong nation rumored to be ruled by dragons dominated the south. The gnoll tribes, having little to offer anyone but their battle experience, began to hire themselves out as mercenaries to the various warlords. They quickly established a reputation for bloodthirstiness and ruthless efficiency.

Once a warlord became completely dependent on gnoll troops, he would be overthrown and his lands added to that of the tribes. Every year, gnoll numbers and territory grew, and they dubbed their new land Naresh, meaning "far home" in their native tongue. The gnolls showed little interest in Western Oerik, and it is unlikely they would have turned their attention that way if not for the minotaurs.

The servants of Baphomet had settled deep under the mountains, away from both elves and gnolls. When the demon lord deemed the time right, he unleashed his minotaur bands against Naresh. Baphomet, it seemed, continued to nurse a grudge against Yeenoghu, and he wanted his rival's worshippers to suffer. A vicious war ensued.

Surprised at this onslaught from an unexpected quarter, the gnolls initially gave ground. Under the skillful leadership of their rangers, however, the gnolls "ceded" more territory to the minotaurs and lured them deep into the forest. This was the invaders' undoing. Being masters of irregular warfare, the gnolls began whittling away at the minotaur forces with traps and ambushes. Eventually, the sheer number of gnolls began to take its toll on their attackers, and they pushed the minotaurs back into the mountains.

The Return

With their enemies retreat, the gnoll tribal chiefs were in favor of declaring victory and ending the war. The priests of Yeenoghu, however, insisted on a counter invasion of minotaur territory. They claimed that their demon prince demanded vengeance, and faced with the word of Yeenoghu, the chiefs had little choice but to acquiesce. The war raged on. This time, the minotaurs had the advantage of fighting on their home turf. The gnolls fought through endless underground labyrinths, and while they were ultimately victorious, the price they paid was terrible.

Another period of rebuilding followed, and the gnoll tribes once again regained their strength. With the former minotaur territory now under their control, the gnolls found themselves, almost by accident, near Ravilla. As time passed, gnoll rangers reported that the eastern defenses of Ravilla were eroding. The elves had never faced invasion from the mountains, and convinced that an attack from this direction would never come, they had grown lax. In light of these reports, the priests of Yeenoghu once again demanded action—here was an opportunity to take vengeance on an ancient foe.

Spurred on by the priests and aided by demons, a coalition of gnoll tribes attacked Ravilla's eastern defenses. With ease, they rushed through the elven lines and then pushed on out of the mountains. Here, they met their match. In a series of bloody battles, the elves and their centaur allies stopped the gnolls and established a new border for Ravilla.

Nevertheless, the elves were in shock—the gnolls, gone for so long, had returned with a vengeance.

Jangir's Rise

Knowing that if the gnolls ever succeeded in breaking open the Abyssal Gateways at the heart of the gray elf cities all would be lost, the elves expected the worst. After their stinging defeat in the forest however, the gnoll tribes began squabbling. Some wanted to attack again, others wanted merely to

enjoy the spoils they had already won. Lacking a strong leader, the gnolls ultimately mounted no major campaigns for over a hundred years.

Some forty years ago, a powerful demon fathered a son with a gnoll woman. This boy was called Jangir, and from a young age he proved a mighty warrior. He joined the priesthood of Yeenoghu and quickly rose through its ranks. With strength, charisma, and the power of demonic blood, Jangir dominated the priests of Yeenoghu and became high priest by the age of thirty. When Stratis was slain, Jangir had already decided to take the tibes to war.

Several weeks after the death of Stratis, a gnoll child came to the temple with a gift for Jangir. It was the flail of the slain god, which had fallen from the sky after the final battle. Here was an undeniable portent. With the flail in hand and Yeenoghu's blessing, Jangir was unstoppable. He united the gnoll tribes under his own leadership and declared himself Priest-King of Naresh.

Now Jangir and the gnolls march to war with summoned demons at their side. If the Priest-King has his way, the Abyssal Gateways will be torn asunder, and Yeenoghu's legions will once again terrorize Western Oerik. The elves ask and grant no quarter. They know they are one step away from annihilation.

ABYSSAL MAW

Medium-Size Outsider
Hit Dice: 2d8+2 (11 hp)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 15 (+5 natural)
Attacks: Bite +5 melee
Damage: Bite 1d8+4
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Cleave dying
Special Qualities: Poison immunity, acid, cold, electricity, and fire resistance 20
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 8
Skills: Climb +6, Jump +8, Listen +6, Spot +4
Feats: Alertness

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: None
Alignment: Chaotic Evil
Advancement: 3-6 HD (Medium-size)

The abyssal maw is a common demon in Yeenoghu's service. Consisting mostly of teeth, it speeds across the battlefield on a variety of appendages. The abyssal maw has a legendary appetite, and it has been known to consume a centaur in less than a minute.

Combat

Gnoll captains use abyssal maws as shock troops. Amyssal maws are vulnerable to missile fire, so the gnolls rush them into melee combat as quickly as possible. Once in the thick of battle, their gnashing teeth do the rest.

Cleave Dying: The abyssal maw loves to tear into its dying foes. If it deals a creature enough damage to make it drop (typically by dropping it to below 0 hit points, killing it, and so on), the abyssal maw gets an immediate, extra melee attack against that fallen creature.

WIZARDS WORKSHOP

CHAINMAIL 110
The gnolls of Naresh.

ROLE MODELS 112
Warbands are like high school; it's better if everyone looks the same.

THE PLAY'S THE THING 114
Time to start working on that personality.

SAGE ADVICE 116
You wouldn't want to play D&D wrong, would you?

SILICON SORCERY 120
Green elf needs food badly.

DUNGEONCRAFT 122
Your campaign world is only as good as the NPCs that live there.

PC PORTRAITS 126
Everyone wants to look like a kung fu master.

by Mike McVey

Painting Your Warbands

Last month in "Role Models" we began discussing group identity and how to choose a color scheme for your warband. Choosing the right color scheme turns your army into a cohesive group. We've already looked at the group identity of the forces of Thalos. Now we are going to look at another faction from the D&D CHAINMAIL miniatures game—the dwarven armies of Mordengard.

One of the great things about the D&D CHAINMAIL game is the variety of miniatures available to the painter and collector; each of the factions is completely different and offers a new set of painting challenges. In some ways the dwarves are the most straightforward of all the factions to paint—most of the miniatures are of a similar size and style, and they don't have the variety of beasts and monsters available to them that some of the other factions have. For the most part, your warband will be made up primarily of dwarves.

Why Dwarves?

You might be wondering what makes the Mordengard faction so great to paint if it doesn't have a lot of cool monsters. When you see a well-painted group of dwarves on the battlefield it will become very clear to you: The other forces just don't have the same level of cohesion. Few other warbands have as strong of a group identity as the forces of Mordengard. Plus, you can paint dwarven miniatures quickly.

Mordengard Color Schemes

As with the rest of the factions for D&D CHAINMAIL, dwarves have a fairly set range of colors that they use. Armor is the dominant feature and is generally painted in cold silver and gunmetal tones. Warmer metallic colors, like bronze and gold, can be used for edging and decoration, such as on the broken tower icon on the dwarves' shields. Hair colors are generally warm and rich, and they range from blond to a deep, rusty red. Any clothing is usually painted in deep red-brown tones. The overall effect you want is warm, rich colors contrasting with cold, steely armor.

A Starting Point

When you start to break it down, there are only a few different types of surface areas that you'll have to deal with when you are painting dwarves—skin, armor, and hair. There are other surfaces on the dwarven miniatures, such as leather, but these three are by far the most common.

As there is a lot of armor to contend with on the dwarves, it's best to use a black undercoat—it also better fits the solid, strong feel that you are trying to achieve with the color scheme. If you are painting heavily armored miniatures, you need to get those areas out of the way first; painting armor can be messy, and you don't want to spoil the rest of the miniature.

Painting Armor

There are generally only two different types of armor you are going to find on dwarves—chainmail and plate. You can paint most kinds of armor by using either the drybrushing or washing technique. Drybrushing is most appropriate where the surface texture is heavily defined, while washing is best suited to larger plates of armor, but the two

THE UNIFIED WARBAND

The dwarves of Mordengard are unified by their gunmetal armor and gold trim. Your dwarven warband might look completely different than this example. For instance, you might determine that the dwarves' armor has been dyed red with the blood of their foes.

techniques can certainly overlap. Going step-by-step, let's look at the female fighter as an example of the best way to deal with the armor on a dwarf.

1. **Apply a black undercoat.** You can generally use a spray, but it's a good idea to go over the miniature with a brush and some thinned down black paint. Make sure that all of the little crevices get covered.

2. **Drybrush first.** Use a mix of silver and black to get a good dark metallic color, then carefully drybrush this over all the armor, including the plate armor. You'll notice that this starts to pick out the detail and the armor will start to take shape.

3. **Drybrush highlights.** On a miniature like the fighter there is only a small amount of chainmail armor, so use one highlight tone—in this case, straight silver. You could use the standard drybrushing technique, but as the chainmail on this miniature is really well defined, you can modify the technique slightly. Load up the brush with silver paint and then gently wipe it across a paper towel only once, so that you leave far more paint on the bristles than you normally would. Then, rather than flicking the tip of the brush across the miniature, gently drag the side of the bristles over the surface. This will deposit more paint, and you'll get a smoother effect. Be careful though! You might need to practice a few times before you get the hang of it.

4. **Paint the plate.** Use the same color that you mixed up for the first highlight, and carefully pick out each of the armor plates. If they are articulated or overlapping, leave a tiny line of black between each one to define the shape. The initial drybrush should act as a guide to where each of the plates are. When this base coat is dry, you can mix up lighter metallic tones and apply them as highlights. It's most effective if you highlight toward the edges of the plates. How many highlights you use is up to you. In the case of the female fighter, three or four highlights are good since she is a leader. Use pure silver as the last highlight to give her armor a good shine.

5. **Apply wash.** When the paint is dry, you can smooth out the highlights and add some extra definition by applying a wash. If done carefully, this adds subtlety and picks out details such as rivets in the armor. There are two good options for what you can use for a wash color. The first is to mix the wash from artists' inks and the second is to use a pre-mixed armor wash. If you want to mix your own, try a mix of brown and blue ink. This might sound a little strange, but the resulting dull purple color gives a great effect. The easiest thing to do is to use a pre-mixed armor wash, and one of the best is Tamiya Smoke. This is thicker than ink, which means it coats the surface rather than running straight into the recesses, so you might want to thin it a little. Use Tamiya thinners rather than water as it is far more effective. Try half Tamiya Smoke and half thinner, and apply it fairly liberally to all of the armored areas. You have to work fairly rapidly because it dries quickly and forms a skin; you can't recoat until it's totally dry. With a little practice you can get some really great effects very quickly.

Skin and Hair

Dwarf skin is best painted in warm, almost ruddy tones. Try adding a little warm brown into the base color and shading with a mix of red and brown ink. If you want to really play on this effect, try blending a little thinned red into the sides of the face and on the nose. You need to be careful here though—too much and the dwarf will turn into a clown. You should also try to keep the highlights fairly subtle. Human flesh can be highlighted almost up to white, but you should highlight dwarves up to a light flesh color.

As mentioned earlier, the warm tones are carried into the hair and beard. Generally, stick to a warm mid-brown, although leaders such as the fighter can look stunning with bright blond hair. The trick with blond hair is to make sure that the hair is shaded with warm brown tones or the overall effect will come out yellow. A mix of yellow and warm brown ink can be used to give a subtle effect.

Remember that cohesion is very important when painting your dwarven warband. It's certainly okay to add some special detail to the more important figures in your warband, but generally, what makes the dwarves look so good on the table is their unity and strong group identity.

by Robin D. Laws • illustrated by John Kovalic

Ability Combos II

DM The beleaguered, filthy gnomes rush out of their prison and thank the lot of you for rescuing them. "Kind sirs! We pledge our eternal fealty to you, our rescuers. We will accompany you and help you as best we can." [Goes into a hacking coughing fit, imitating the sickly gnomes.]

STEVE We can't have these guys following us around. Their coughing will alert every monster in the place.

DM Which one of you has the highest Charisma? That's the one they flock around, decorating with garlands of dried-up weeds.

YOU Uh, that's me, Brank. But Brank's as dumb as a box of rocks. How does that work?

Last time around, we started to look at ability combos—collections of personality traits a character is likely to possess if she has a low score in one ability and a high score in another. (If you need a refresher on this concept, be sure to reread issue #288). Like last time, keep in mind that these are merely ideas for roleplaying certain characters, not official definitions of how every PC with a particular set of ability scores must act.

Low Intelligence, High Charisma

"Now that you've heard all those big words, here's what we're really going to do."

Logic and learning are deadly words to you. When you hear them, you think of boring people with dusty gray beards nattering on about long-dead kings and ancient history. You remember the days when your tutors tried to get you to memorize all of that nonsense. Fortunately, you never had to. Ever since you can remember, friends have flocked around you, anxious to win your approval.

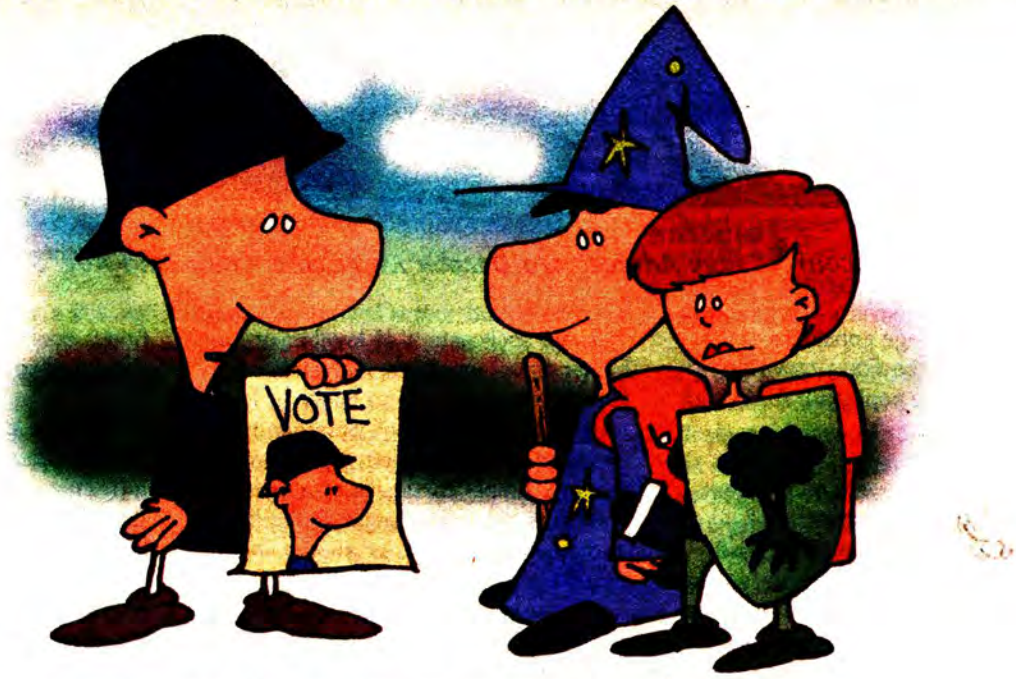
You've always been the center of attention, and as far as you're concerned, that's the most natural thing in the world. It was the so-called smart children who looked up to you, not the other way around. You let them do your work for you, but you gave them something even better in return—the prestige of being in your company. That was a big favor you did for them. Even your tutors, though they said they wanted you to buckle down, really had a soft spot for you and made things easier for you when necessary.

In the years since then you've been afforded the same treatment, as is only right. You are a natural leader: good-looking, magnetic, and irresistible to the opposite sex. Sometimes jealous people try to make you feel bad. They make remarks suggesting that you're stupid. This irks you more than you care to admit, but you always manage to hide it. You know that any insult you give in return will get a bigger laugh than theirs, even if it's less clever. Being smart isn't all it's cracked up to be anyway. You're not sure why, but smart people seem mostly unhappy. Let them keep their books, logic, and sarcasm! You're always in a good mood because wherever you go, people flock around you. You can tell from the looks they give you how great they think you are. That many people can't be wrong, can they?

Low Wisdom, High Charisma

"Don't worry about it! He wouldn't think of refusing me!"

First and foremost, you care about people. You love to talk and to listen. Grand stories of kings and wars are interesting sometimes, but what really attracts your attention are the little tales about folks you know. Everyday anecdotes, especially funny ones about



"MUCH AS I'D LOVE TO COME ADVENTURING WITH YOU, WITH LOW INTELLIGENCE, LOW WISDOM, AND HIGH CHARISMA, I THINK MY PERFECT CAREER IS IN POLITICS..."

people's foibles, that's what you want to hear. Some might call it gossip, but you call it life.

After all, it's not like you don't get into humorous scrapes yourself from time to time. All right, not time to time—constantly. You're always letting your heart lead you into trouble. You can't help it if you're always falling in love, or if other people are always falling in love with you. On some occasions, you've had numerous people in love with you at the same time. You've jumped out of more bedroom windows than you care to count.

You feel bad sometimes about the hearts you've broken over the years, but somehow you never manage to learn from your mistakes. In retrospect, it all makes sense, but it never seems to when there's still time to make a different decision.

It's not just on the eternal battleground of romance that you're always getting into trouble. It's ironic, perhaps, that you can so easily persuade others, because you're easily swayed yourself. When you feel something deeply, you want to act.

You're forever promising to rescue kidnapped victims, recover lost heirlooms, and humble cruel authorities. On the other hand, you're very good at convincing others to accompany you on your missions, so it all seems to work out.

High Wisdom, Low Charisma

"If only you'd listened to me, we wouldn't be in this mess . . ."

Sometimes you feel like you're laboring under a curse. All your life, you've been able to look at a situation and figure out the safest, most sensible course of action. Yet no one ever seems to listen to you. Instead, they always heed some blockhead or a ninny interested only in what her emotions tell her.

You're never quite sure why people don't listen to you. Maybe it's because people believe what suits them instead of what actually is. They don't want you to dash their hopes by spelling out the exact manner in which their latest scheme is doomed to fail. But then, you've seen other people talk sense into the exact same foolish people you can never seem to reach. Maybe you're just too blunt. Perhaps you should try harder to hide your scorn and doubt. Still, when the same thing happens time and again, it's hard to hide your frustration.

Even worse is what happens when it turns out you were right all along and you find yourself among your fellow adventurers, knee-deep in dragon ordure. You pride yourself on common sense, so you know that people don't like hearing the words "I told you so." But, when the curse that was plainly written on the outside of the sarcophagus starts to fell your companions one by one, can you stop yourself from saying it? Shamefully, the answer is no. Ruefully, you realize only too well that common sense and people sense are two very different things.

You're not sure why, but smart people seem mostly unhappy.

YOU Uh, listen to me, friend gnomes. I was never much for fancy book-learning, but even I know that certain dungeon areas are unsafe to hack and cough in.

SAGE ADVICE

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This month the Sage considers questions about the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* book and *Tome and Blood*.

What feats can a fighter take for his bonus feats?

If a cleric of Mystra can cast arcane spells, can she go to a temple of Mystra, cast her arcane spells, and then get to apply a metamagic feat for free (as described on page 247 of the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* book)? Or are only divine spells affected? Do the spells to be augmented just have to be cast in the temple or must they be prepared in the temple as well? Are there any limitations to this ability?

Any spell, arcane or divine, a cleric of Mystra casts inside a temple of Mystra gets the benefit. The spell does not have to be prepared inside the temple, just cast there. The metamagic effect, however, ends when the character leaves the temple.

I have a bard multiclassing into wizard. As a wizard, I can gain a familiar. If I take the Improved Familiar feat (from the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* and *Tome and Blood*), do bard levels apply to the feat's arcane spellcaster level prerequisite?

No, only levels in arcane spellcasting classes that include getting a familiar as a class feature (currently wizard and sorcerer) apply. If you have levels in both wizard and sorcerer, you can add them together both for purposes of determining what kind of special familiar you can get and for determining any familiar's special abilities.

Several characters in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* seem to have access to spells of 10th level or higher, but there are no spells of those levels included anywhere in the book. Where can I find these spells?

Some spellcasters of level 21 or higher have access to spell slots of level 10 or more, not to spells of level 10 or more. These spell slots can be used for spells modified with metamagic feats or simply for spells of a lower level (see the next question). For example, a quickened *meteor swarm* would require a 13th-level spell slot. See the sidebar on page 289 of the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*.

The description of Szass Tam on page 208 of the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* shows that he has up to 16th-level spells. But his Intelligence is only 22, meaning he should only be able to cast up to 12th-level spells, right? Is there some sort of exception to the rule governing what level spells you can cast when you're taking epic levels to gain spell slots? Or is this just a typo?

Actually, Szass Tam's description says he has 16th-level spell slots available. This is not an error. You can have a spell slot available without being able to cast spells of that level. As noted in the previous question, you can put a lower level spell in the slot or use a lower-level spell and a metamagic feat to fill the slot (except for Heighten Spell, which actually raises the modified spell's level). See "Sage Advice," issue #276 for details.

Can old reference books for older versions of the Forgotten Realms setting still be used in the new version, for example, the list of battles and legends from *The Fall of Myth Drannor* boxed set or the maps from the *City of Waterdeep* boxed set?

The vast majority of background material from older products (such as maps and historical details) is still valid with the new setting; if you find a conflict, the new book is the definitive source.

What feats given in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* book can a fighter take for his bonus feats? Same question for wizards and their bonus feats.

For fighters, any feat marked [Fighter, General], see page 33 of the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* book.

Wizards can choose any metamagic feat or item creation feat as a bonus feat (as stated on page 54 of the *Player's Handbook*).

What does the term "drow abilities" refer to in the Draegloth's (from *Monster Compendium: Monsters of Faerûn*) special qualities entry? Does a Draegloth get spell resistance?

It refers to the special qualities of drow, which are listed in the drow entry in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* book (and in the *Monster Manual*). These include:

- Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*dancing lights, darkness,* and *faerie fire.* These abilities are as the spells cast by a sorcerer of the drow's character level.
- Darkvision up to 120 feet.
- Spell resistance 11 + class level.
- +2 racial bonus to Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities.
- Light Blindness (Ex): Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a *daylight* spell) blinds drow for 1 round. In addition, they suffer a -1 circumstance penalty to all attack rolls, saves, and checks while operating in bright light.
- Proficient with longsword, rapier, longbow, composite longbow, shortbow, and composite shortbow, regardless of character class.
- Immunity to magic sleep spells and effects.
- +2 racial bonus to Will saves against enchantment spells or effects.
- +2 racial bonus to Search, Spot, and Listen checks. A drow who merely passes within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door is entitled to a Search check as though actively looking for it.

Note that a Draegloth with class levels has Spell Resistance 11, despite its additional levels and Hit Dice.

Monster Compendium: Monsters of Faerûn provides several new abilities for liches. When I'm creating a lich for my game, how do I decide which abilities to assign? Will any of these abilities change the lich's CR?

When creating a lich, just pick the abilities you want to add. Every two abilities you add increase the lich's CR by 2. For example, if you take the example lich from the *Monster Manual* and add doom gaze and grasp of death, the creature will be CR 15.

For purposes of customizing a lich, the example lich from the *Monster Manual* has four special abilities: damaging touch, fear aura, paralyzing touch, and lich immunities (cold, electricity, and *polymorph*). Note that all liches have the undead creature type (and all that the type entails, see page 6 of the *Monster Manual*), +4 turn resistance, and damage reduction 15/+1. If you don't want to increase your lich's CR, just swap one or more of the four *Monster Manual* special abilities for an equal number of special abilities from *Monster Compendium: Monsters of Faerûn*.

Assuming you are high enough level to cast a persistent _time stop_ spell, could you use the virtual 24 hours the spell lasts to rest and recover your spells?

You can't make *time stop* persistent (its duration is effectively instantaneous for purposes of the Persistent Spell feat).

Suppose I have an archmage or hierophant who chooses the spell-like ability power. What is my caster level for this ability? Do feats like Spell Focus and Spell Penetration still apply?

The caster level for the spell-like ability is the same as for any other spell the character casts. A 15th-level wizard/5th-level archmage, for example, casts spells as a 20th-level caster.

A feat such as Spell Penetration, which affects any spell the user casts, also affects the spell-like ability. The Spell Focus feat also affects the spell-like ability, provided the spell-like ability is from the correct school. For example, if you have Spell Focus (Evocation), the feat applies to your *fireball* spell-like ability. Note that you can make a spell that has been modified with a metamagic feat a spell-like ability by devoting the appropriate spell slot to the spell-like ability (see page 42 of the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* book).

Does the natural armor bonus of a creature that happens to be a familiar stack with the natural armor bonus received from being a familiar? The examples in _Tome and Blood_ would seem to indicate so. Some text on page 11 in _Tome and Blood_, however, would appear to indicate otherwise. In other words, what would be the AC of a pseudodragon familiar (acquired with the Improved Familiar feat) for a 7th-level sorcerer and how would it be calculated?

Increase the pseudodragon's natural armor by +4, just as you would for any 7th-level character's familiar. For a pseudodragon, this yields a final AC of 22 (which is exactly what the example pseudodragon familiar's statistics on page 16 shows). The text on page 11 merely points out that this increase to natural armor is not any kind of magical bonus, the familiar's natural armor rating simply gets bigger. Because the increase is not a bonus, you don't have to worry about it going away in an antimagic field or about how it stacks with other bonuses. For example, a 7th-level character's pseudodragon familiar would have an Armor Class of 26 if it received a *mage armor* spell (+2 size, +10 natural, +4 armor).

I'd like to have an owl familiar. In the _Monster Manual_, the owl is listed as dealing damage of 1d2-2. If this is true, an owl does at most zero points of damage. Is this the correct way to interpret this? How can an owl attack?

There is a minimum of 1 point for a successful attack, see Damage on page 7 of the *Monster Manual* (this applies to characters as well, see page 118 in the *Player's Handbook*).

What are the proper skill bonuses for an owl? The text in the _Monster Manual_ seems to contradict the tabular listing. Is one somehow derived from the other? If the latter, how is it calculated?

The owl's skills are: Listen +14, Move Silently +20, Spot +6*, exactly as listed in the *Monster Manual*. These numbers include a +8 racial bonus to Listen checks and a +14 racial bonus to Move

THE UNSPEAKABLE OAF by John Kovalic

Silently checks, as explained in the Skills section of the owl entry. At night, the owl gets an extra +8 bonus to Spot checks, for a total Spot score of +14 (the asterisk after the Spot score indicates that the skill is subject to a special conditional modifier).

Many creatures in the *Monster Manual* have similar skill entries. See Skills on page 11 of the *Monster Manual*.

If a master and familiar can communicate telepathically at first level (through the empathic link), what's the major advantage to verbal speech at 5th level?

First, the familiar is now smart enough to actually speak, so it's much easier to understand than it was when the master was 1st level. This clarity of communication is mostly a function of the familiar's increasing Intelligence score, however, and the main reason speech is broken out into a separate ability at 5th level is to remind players and DMs that the familiar can carry on a normal conversation. Also, the speech ability is not supernatural, so it works in antimagic areas. It's also possible for characters other than the master to understand the familiar's speech, provided that they have access to a *tongues* or *comprehend languages* spell.

What's the major advantage to verbal speech at the 5th level?

How does a bladesinger prepare and cast spells? What ability score determines the DC for saving throws against a bladesinger's spells? What about bonus spells?

A bladesinger prepares and casts spells just as a wizard does. Intelligence governs a bladesinger's bonus spells and the DC for those spells' saving throws. For an update to the bladesinger prestige class, go to **www.wizards.com/dnd** and check out the Web Enhancement section. The material on the website supersedes the bladesinger entry in *Tome and Blood*.

I can't find any information about how many spells prestige class spellcasters know. I am going on the presumption that those that gain bonus spells per day of their existing class (such as loremaster and spellsword) do not automatically add additional spells to their spellbook as they gain levels.

They do add spells to their lists. For example, a wizard/loremaster gains 2 spells for her spellbook when using a loremaster level to increase spellcasting. A sorcerer/loremaster would learn more spells as well. Adding spells to your spellbook or personal repertoire is part of spellcasting.

When a prestige class casts spells from its own spell list, such as the assassin, blackguard, or bladesinger, how do I determine how many spells the character knows and the save DCs for those spells? Are there any rules for this?

The prestige class description will give you this information. For example, when a character casts spells as a wizard, her spellcasting works just like a wizard's. The assassin and bladesinger cast spells and gain new spells as wizards; they keep spellbooks and add two spells to their books at each level, just as wizards do. Their Intelligence scores give them bonus spells and determine the save DCs for their spells.

A blackguard is a divine spellcaster and "knows" all the spells on the blackguard spell list; this is true for any prestige class that casts divine spells.

Can I use my masterwork thieves tools with ranged legerdemain?

No. You don't use any tools at all with ranged legerdemain.

When a prestige class adds levels of spellcasting from a previous class but no other class benefit, does that include benefits to a familiar? Or is improving your familiar a benefit to your familiar?

Improving your familiar is a class benefit of the class that made the familiar available in the first place, and classes that merely advance your spellcasting ability do not also advance your familiar. For example, a 10th-level wizard/5th-level loremaster has a familiar with only 10th-level abilities.

Is there an error in the table for the arcane trickster class? The text says the bonus increases by +1d6 every two levels but it does not say what the initial value of the bonus is. The table shows +3d6 damage at 2nd level, going up one die every 2 levels to +7d6 at 10th level. Also, it says that this damage stacks with any other sneak attack bonuses. That would mean that an arcane trickster could have a darn good sneak attack (+5d6 at 2nd level when you consider the +2d6 the arcane trickster must have to qualify for the class). Is that right?

No. The text is correct and the table is wrong. The sneak attack entries on the table should read: 2nd level: +1d6; 4th level: +2d6; 6th level: +3d6; 8th level: +4d6; 10th level: +5d6. This ability stacks with any other sneak attack the character might have, so that a 10th-level arcane trickster has a sneak attack of at least +7d6 (considering the +2d6 the character had to have just to qualify for the class).

When you sneak attack with one of the orb or lesser orb spells from *Tome and Blood*, do you get sneak attack damage from every orb in the volley? Also, what effect, if any, does the Fortitude saving throw have on the sneak attack damage?

The sneak attack damage applies only to the first orb in the volley (just as it does when you throw multiple shuriken as part of a single attack action, see "Sage Advice," issue #276). If the first orb hits, add the sneak attack damage to the orb damage, then roll the saving throw and halve the result if the save succeeds.

Under the Spell Specialization feat in *Tome and Blood*, it says that ray and energy missile spells get a +2 damage modifier. In the case of multiple missile spells like *lesser fire orb*, is this modifier treated as +2 damage per missile?

The +2 damage bonus applies to the first missile in the volley attack you make, not to each one.

If I take spellsword as a prestige class and choose wizard as the previous spellcaster class, what happens if I advance several levels as a spellsword (gaining several +1 bonuses to the previous spellcaster class) then take another level of wizard? What happens if I take a couple of different

prestige classes and then go back to wizard? For example, suppose I have a 5th level wizard/4th level fighter/ 10th level spellsword/1st level mage of the arcane order?

The sample character casts spells (and has free spells for his spellbook) as a 16th-level wizard. The order in which you take the classes has no effect on the character's spellcasting ability. Just add the wizard spellcasting boosts from prestige classes to whatever the character's current wizard level happens to be. Remember that if you have more than one arcane spellcasting class, you have to decide where the spellcasting boost will go as you add each prestige class level. Once you assign a bonus, you cannot change it.

Can you add a metamagic feat more than once?

Can you add a metamagic feat more than once to any particular spell? For example, double maximize or double extend?

You can apply most metamagic feats more than once, just stack up the costs, and remember to apply the additional effects to the basic spell. For example, if you extend a spell twice, you get 3 times the duration, not 4 times the duration (each extension adds 100% of the spell's base duration).

There are a few metamagic feats that are constructed so as to make stacking worthless or pointless. You cannot, for example, get more than maximum damage out of a spell by Maximizing the spell more than once (if you want to send the spell's damage through the roof, use Empower Spell multiple times). Heighten Spell already allows you to set the spell's effective level anywhere you want (and can manage), so there's no point in applying the feat more than once.

At first, fourth, and sixth level the dragon disciple prestige class grants a Hit Die increase that makes your Hit Dice bigger. The ability description specifically says it is not retroactive, but what about future levels? If, for example, a first level dragon disciple takes a level of sorcerer, is that Hit Die increased to a d6? If so, what happens if the dragon disciple chooses to take a level of fighter? Is that Hit Die changed in any way?

You gain Hit Dice from the dragon disciple class according to the class chart. For other classes, you gain Hit Dice by class. For example, if you have 4 levels of dragon disciple, you'd gain 1d8 if you added a 5th level of dragon disciple. If you a added a level of fighter instead, you'd gain 1d10. When your dragon disciple Hit Dice increase in size, your previous Hit Dice from the class do not increase retroactively. For example, if you have 10 levels of dragon disciple, you'll have 3d6 (for levels 1-3), 2d8 (for levels 4-5), and 5d10 (for levels 6-10).

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by Will McDermott

GAUNTLET DARK LEGACY

If you want to give your campaign a little Gauntlet *flavor, try these potions and amulets, which closely mimic their counterparts in* Gauntlet: Dark Legacy.

Bursting on the video game scene of the early 1980s during the height of DUNGEON & DRAGONS' early popularity, the *Gauntlet* arcade game by Midway Games was the epitome of the dungeon crawl. You and your buddies walked through mazes of passageways, mowing down armies of enemies, eating whatever food you found, and hauling treasure out of the dungeon.

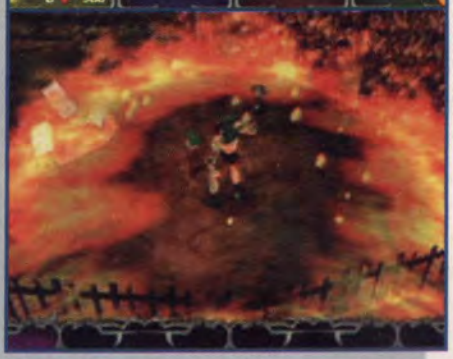
Over the years, the graphics have improved and a story has grown up around the crawl, but the *Gauntlet* games are still about killing hordes of creatures, finding chests full of treasure, and eating up all the food. The latest release for arcades and the PLAYSTATION 2 is *Gauntlet: Dark Legacy,* a gorgeous repackaging of most of the *Gauntlet: Legends* levels, with many new, intricate levels thrown in. It's mindless (and addictive) gory fun for the whole family.

There are two things that set the world of *Gauntlet* apart from other fantasy settings. First, every character uses magic, which comes neatly packaged in multi-colored bottles you find sprinkled throughout the lands by some benevolent god. Second, the magic items that the *Gauntlet* god has placed in your dungeon-crawling path are disposable. Some are single-use items while others give you three, five, or ten uses before they disappear in a puff of illogic.

Gauntlet Potions

Gauntlet potions may be either imbibed or thrown as a grenade, and you get a different effect depending on how you use it. If drunk, the potions provide protection from a certain type of energy or creature. If thrown, these potions explode as an area effect spell. Note that breaking the potion vial lets loose the spell, so these can be dangerous items to carry around. Potion spell effects function as though cast by a 10th-level caster. *Gauntlet* potions have a range increment of 10 feet and follow the rules for throwing grenade-like objects (see *Player's Handbook,* page 138).

Under the normal rules of magic item creation, you cannot create a potion that stores a spell of 4th level or higher. Thus, the creator of these *Gauntlet* potions must have both the Brew Potion and Craft Wondrous Item feats and use both in the creation of these items. To create potions similar to this, use the following formula: (highest spell's level x caster level x 50 gp) + (additional spell's level x caster level x 50 gp x 0.5). The resulting total is the market price of the item.



RED POTION

Imbibed: *Resist elements (fire)*
Thrown: *Fireball*

Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, *resist elements, fireball;* **Market Price:** 2,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 1,000 gp + 80 XP.

BLUE POTION

Imbibed: *Resist elements (electricity)*
Thrown: 20 foot radius burst of electricity, dealing 10d6 points of electricity damage

Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, *lightning, resist elements;* **Market Price:** 2,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 1,000 gp + 80 XP.

GREEN POTION

Imbibed: *Resist elements (acid)*
Thrown: *Cloudkill*

Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, *resist elements, cloudkill;* **Market Price:** 3,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 1,500 gp + 120 XP.

YELLOW POTION

Imbibed: *Protection from evil*
Thrown: *Circle of doom*

Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, *circle of doom, protection from evil;* **Market Price:** 2,750 gp; **Cost to Create:** 1,375 gp + 110 XP.

Gauntlet Amulets

In *Gauntlet* all melee weapons have the throwing and returning enhancements and magic amulets give weapons a little additional oomph. In D&D terms, as soon as you don one of these amulets, it transforms into a magic melee weapon of the wearer's choice. The catch is that once the weapon has been used to attack 25 times, it disappears. If the wielder chooses a double weapon, only one of the weapon's heads is enchanted.

FIRE AMULET

Weapon's Special Abilities: *+1 throwing, returning, flaming weapon*

Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, *magic stone, telekinesis,* and *flame blade, flame strike,* or *fireball;* **Market Price:** 4,675 gp; **Cost to Create:** 2,338 gp + 187 XP.

ELECTRIC AMULET

Weapon's Special Abilities: *+1 throwing, returning, shock weapon*

Caster Level: 8th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, *magic stone, telekinesis,* and *call lightning* or *lightning bolt;* **Market Price:** 4,675 gp; **Cost to Create:** 2,338 gp + 187 XP.

ACID AMULET

Weapon's Special Abilities: *+1 throwing, returning, keen weapon*

Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, *keen edge, magic stone, telekinesis;* **Market Price:** 4,675 gp; **Cost to Create:** 2,338 gp + 187 XP.

LIGHT AMULET

Weapon's Special Abilities: *+2 throwing, returning weapon*

Caster Level: 7th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, *magic stone, telekinesis;* **Market Price:** 4,675 gp; **Cost to Create:** 2,338 gp + 187 XP.

by Ray Winninger

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"Dungeoncraft" is an on-going column that explores the fine art of Dungeon Mastering and offers an interesting behind-the-scenes look at the development of an actual D&D campaign. If you've missed any of the previous installments of "Dungeoncraft," you can find them online at: **http://www.wizards.com/dragon**

Raiders of the Lost World

Welcome to the thirty-fifth installment of "Dungeoncraft," your monthly repository of tips, tricks, and advice for Dungeon Masters. This month, we're going to generate a few key NPCs to populate Janda's Valley, the "home base" for the Lost World campaign we started building about a year ago.

In issue #262, "Dungeoncraft" discussed the fact that a home base often lives or dies on the strength of the NPCs who inhabit it. At this stage, you shouldn't be looking to develop each and every one of the base's residents (even if you had the time and energy, that would be a mistake). Instead, concentrate on a handful of unique individuals who can give the locale some flavor. Think of your campaign as a television series. The PCs are the stars of the show and the NPCs you're creating now are the supporting characters. Everyone else who lives in the home base is an extra, one of the dozens of unnamed characters who pop up each week to park the stars' cars or sell them a cup of coffee.

The first time this column covered nonplayer characters, it identified the four major functions NPCs serve. Since we want to make sure that the NPCs we create will cover all our needs, a quick review is in order.

NPCs Offer . . .

Exposition: Somebody has to serve as the source of legends, rumors, riddles, and revelations that flesh out the campaign setting in the imaginations of the players.

Services or Tactical Options: Eventually, the game will present challenges that require skills and abilities that the PCs don't possess themselves. What if a PC is bitten by a giant spider and none of his comrades can cast the *neutralize poison* spell? Suppose the party needs to assess the value of a rare necklace they've recovered and none of them has the Appraise skill? Obviously, in all such instances, locating an appropriate NPC will be one of the party's first impulses.

Adventure Hooks: As the campaign stretches on, you'll need princesses to be captured, retired adventurers with old scores to settle, and absent-minded wizards capable of accidentally releasing a stray horror from another dimension.

Atmosphere: Some NPCs might exist for no other reason than to reinforce the general atmosphere of your campaign world. The Lost World might include an NPC who lost an arm to a marauding allosaurus, for instance, just to remind the players how dangerous the place can be.

Note that all of these functions were described in more detail in issue #262. If you want more detail on this subject, you might want to dip into your collection of back issues or visit the "Dungeoncraft" archives online before you go much further.

In addition to guaranteeing that he or she can serve one or more of these four basic functions, you have a responsibility to make sure that each of your important NPCs is somehow unique. Don't forget that NPCs are one of the most important tools you can use to make your campaign world come alive in your players' imaginations. After all, it's hard to imagine an interesting place that isn't populated with interesting inhabitants. Unless you've taken the appropriate steps to provide each NPC with some unique qualities, you'll soon discover that your players have a tough time remembering their names and capabilities.

Making an NPC memorable is usually a matter of good roleplaying. Before we explore some strategies for how to do this, let's begin with what doesn't

work. As a general rule, extremely deep, subtly nuanced characters don't work well in roleplaying games. During a typical game session, the tools you'll have to convey character are actually quite limited—everything you say and do is improvised, the players are often dividing their attention between several different activities, and you'll usually have very little in the way of sets, props, and costumes to work with. Trying to prepare an NPC in the same way that Robert DeNiro prepares for a new role is a big mistake. Not only is it unlikely that you'll actually achieve your objective, you'll also end up drawing a far less vivid portrait in your players' imaginations than you might have if you'd attempted something simpler. This general point is so important and the source of so much frustration and wasted effort on the part of beginning DMs that it merits its own commemorative Rule of Dungeoncraft.

The Sixth Rule of Dungeoncraft: Simple, easily identifiable characteristics are the best tools for portraying NPCs.

Unlike the most memorable heroes of film and literature, the most effective NPCs are usually broad caricatures or stereotypes. When creating a character for a roleplaying game, your most important goal is to give the players a clear, consistent image. Selecting a stereotype means that your players are probably familiar with the characterization you're reaching for, allowing their imaginations to help you achieve it. In other words, it's far better to do a very good job bringing an extremely simple character to life than it is to do a bad or mediocre job of bringing a more complicated character to life.

Tactically, the best way to bring out an NPC's personality during play is to select and reinforce an appropriate character trait that stems from the stereotype or caricature you've chosen for the NPC. Given that the Lost World is a slightly more ambitious setting than our previous effort, it's probably a good time to amplify and expand the discussion.

Basically, a roleplaying hook is a single personality trait, mannerism, or background detail that allows the players to very quickly paint a mental picture of the NPC. Effective roleplaying hooks have the following characteristics.

They are noticeable. A good hook is something that would be obvious to all observers. "Feels guilty over the death of her brother" is not a good roleplaying hook since guilt is a very internal emotion. The situations in which the players might notice the NPC's guilt are probably quite rare and call for too much subtle interpreting. Effective hooks are those you can come right out and announce when necessary. Obviously, you can't reasonably introduce an NPC with, "This is Janda. She looks like she feels guilt over the death of her brother." Avoid hooks that don't obviously manifest themselves in some sort of outward behavior or detail.

They are ubiquitous. Hooks are most effective when they are used over and over again. This sort of continuous reinforcement is often necessary to guarantee that your players fully digest each of your NPCs. After all, it's likely that they'll be introduced to several characters over a short period of time, all with unusual names and without any strong visual cues to help them keep the characters distinct in their minds. Hammering away at your roleplaying hooks in encounter after encounter is usually the best way to guarantee that your players are getting the picture. As a consequence, you should strive to

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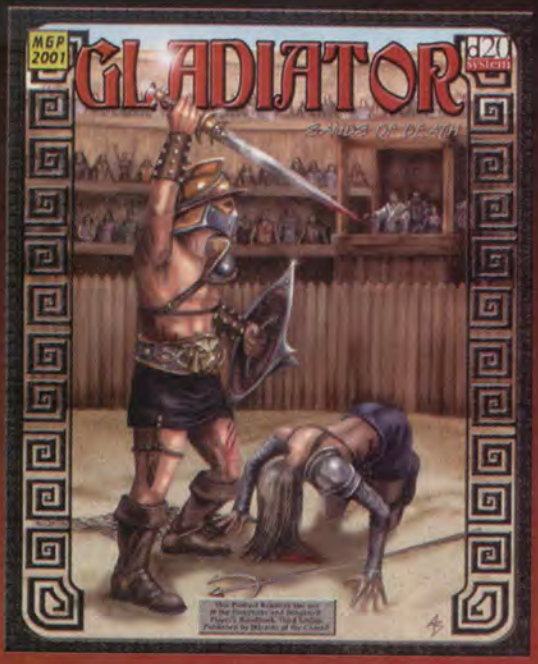

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select hooks that are usable in a wide variety of circumstances and won't become annoying with frequent repetition. A hook like "dislikes children" is probably not very effective because in the average fantasy world it's unlikely that the players will always encounter the NPC when children are present. Similarly, "likes to sing an old elven ballad" might not be a good hook because taking the time to sing the same song every time the players meet a common NPC might easily become annoying.

They suggest a great deal about the character. A good character hook should tell the players something interesting about the NPC. Ideally, your character hook should stem directly from the caricature or stereotype you selected, giving the players an obvious clue as to what you have in mind. "Errol always wears a red, felt hat" doesn't really tell us anything about him. On the other hand, "Errol always wears the uniform of a Lakashan knight" says a lot, particularly if the Lakashans are known to be strong and silent warriors who observe a strict code of honesty.

The Sixth Rule of Dungeoncraft: Simple, easily identifiable characteristics are the best tools for portraying NPCs.

In the end, the best way to help you craft effective roleplaying hooks is to illustrate by example. Below is an assortment of sample hooks that should make for some pretty entertaining NPCs. You can use any of these options as is or use them as inspiration for your own creations. These hooks are divided into three categories: behaviors, mannerisms, and physical details. Behaviors are tendencies or attitudes, mannerisms are specific ways a character says or does something, and physical details are unique aspects of a character's appearance or possessions that tell an observer something interesting about the character.

Behaviors

Sloppy: This character is a complete mess. He's disheveled, he's always losing things, and his home is a total disaster. Basically, this hook indicates that the character in question is a disorganized (although possibly quite capable) thinker and there are all sorts of ways you can communicate this during play. During an encounter, the sloppy character might spill something all over one of the PCs, you might ask for a successful Balance check to enter the character's home without tripping over all the junk that's present, and so on. In fact, this hook might serve as the springboard for an entire adventure when the sloppy character manages to misplace an important item or clue.

Arrogant: The arrogant NPC believes that she is naturally superior to everyone else, especially the PCs. As a result, she tends to talk down to them and openly question their abilities whenever possible.

Storyteller: The storyteller has an anecdote for every occasion. Whenever she encounters the PCs, she finds some excuse for regaling them with a lengthy story of her exploits. In fact, to get any answers out of her, the PCs are usually forced to interrupt and cut these stories short. This hook is meant to suggest that the NPC in question is worldly, experienced, and a useful font of knowledge. It also suggests that she's more than a bit self-centered. Obviously, this hook works best if you're capable of easily improvising appropriate long, rambling stories.

Naive/Innocent: While playing this character, open your eyes wide, speak slowly, and attempt to change the subject whenever anyone mentions something unpleasant. You can also reinforce how gullible (but sweet) the character is by demonstrating that he'll believe just about anything anyone tells him.

Gloomy: The gloomy character is a complete pessimist. She's depressed every time the PCs encounter her and she's always quick to point out the possible flaw in any plan. Just about every conversation with her begins with a list of all the things that are currently going wrong in her life, and like the storyteller, the PCs usually have to interrupt her meandering speech in order to get her to address the topic at hand.

Charmer: This character makes a point of always complimenting everyone on just about everything imaginable: appearance, successful actions, a well-turned phrase, and so on. Many of these compliments are so obviously forced, though, that it's quite clear he's merely trying to ingratiate himself with everyone he can.

Mannerisms

Peculiar voice: Not all DMs can pull this one off, but if you can manage it, a distinctive voice can be a powerful roleplaying hook. A rumbling, gruff voice, a squeaky falsetto, or a particular foreign accent might be just the thing to bring a character to life in the imaginations of the players. You should only attempt an unusual voice if you're confident that you know what you're doing. It's very easy for an unusual voice to come across as silly, possibly ruining the atmosphere of your campaign.

Slow, Drawn-out Speech: Speaking very slowly and deliberately can be a great way to suggest that a particular NPC is strange or mysterious.

Loud and Boisterous: This guy is loud and laughs a lot. Generally, the fact that this fellow is so loud and boisterous tends to suggest that he is adventurous and fun-loving.

Big Words: Another effective mannerism is to speak only in unbroken strings of polysyllabic words, like Mister Spock from *Star Trek*. Never use contractions and never say, "I think you just might succeed" when you can say, "I think you have an excellent likelihood of completing this endeavor successfully." This mannerism is meant to suggest that the NPC is very intelligent.

The Silent Type: Not saying much at all can sometimes say a whole lot. One way to create an effective NPC is to speak as little as possible. Whenever possible, answer any questions the players might ask with a gesture, a facial expression, or an action. This hook suggests a "loner" type and a man (or

woman) of mystery.

Curt: This NPC is one cut above the silent type. She speaks freely, but uses as few words as possible and speaks very fast. She's also always in a big hurry to get some place and never seems to have much time for others. You can use this hook to suggest a character that is bureaucratic or compulsive.

Flamboyant Dresser: This NPC combines a desire to be noticed with a distinct lack of taste. The only saving grace is that the NPC obviously has the financial means to constantly update his wardrobe, marking him as someone possibly capable of employing the PCs.

Weasel: Obviously motivated only by self interest, this NPC tries to wring every concession possible from everyone he deals with. An effective tool for comic relief, this trait can breath life into an otherwise faceless store owner or caravan driver. It's also effective when placed in a less-familiar context. A weaselly merchant is expected; a weaselly knight is memorable.

Physical Details

Familiar Looks: Sometimes, deciding that an NPC looks like a particular actor or celebrity can go a long way toward making that NPC come alive. After all, the minute you hear that the chancellor looks like Sean Connery you have a pretty good idea of what he's like.

Big and Brutish: A classic and simple possibility is to simply describe the NPC as large and hulking. This tends to immediately give the players the idea that the NPC is tough and mean. Of course, every once in a while you can confound their expectations and introduce a burly NPC who is actually quiet and sensitive, or even cowardly.

Scarface: Making a character badly scarred or disfigured in some way is a classic method of suggesting that he is a sort of outcast from society and possibly evil.

Missing Limb: This NPC is easily spotted because he is missing either an arm or leg. The missing limb could serve simply as a recognizable feature, or it could be an adventure hook in and of itself. A wealthy merchant on the Lost World could easily organize a hunt for the allosaurus that crippled him.

Not from Around Here: Because of skin tone, dress, or even race, the NPC is obviously from a different geographical region. The NPC's unusual looks could be the hook that causes the PCs to seek her out—no one knows more about distant lands than those who call those lands home.

And there you have it. Now that we can create effective roleplaying hooks, it's time to crank out the handful of NPCs we'll need to help bring Janda's valley to life. Next month it's "Raiders of the Lost World, Part II."

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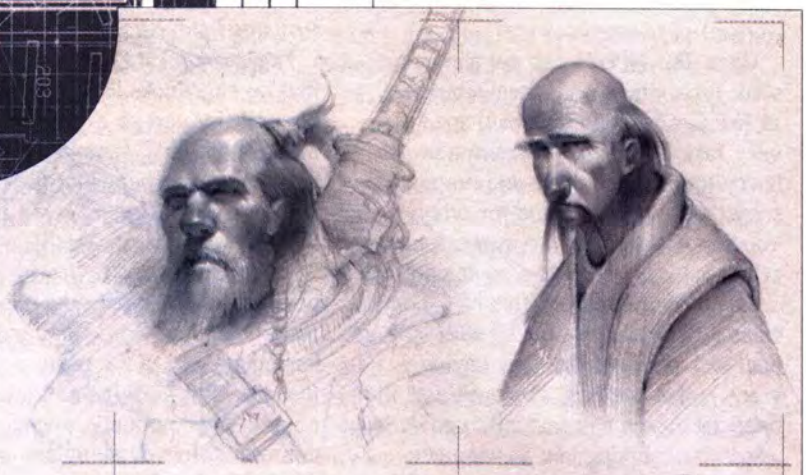

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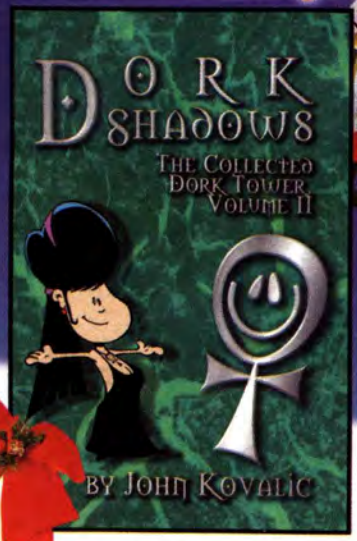

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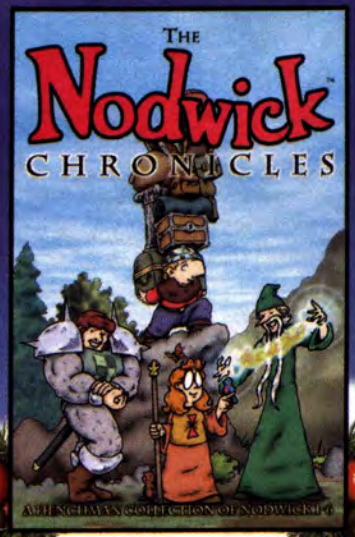

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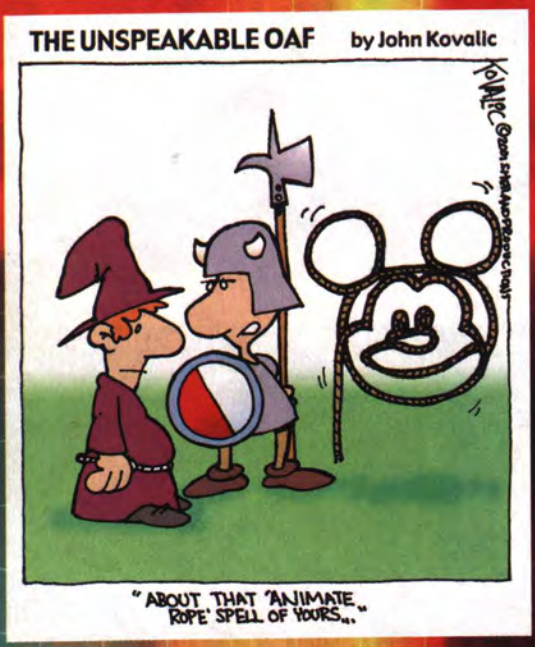

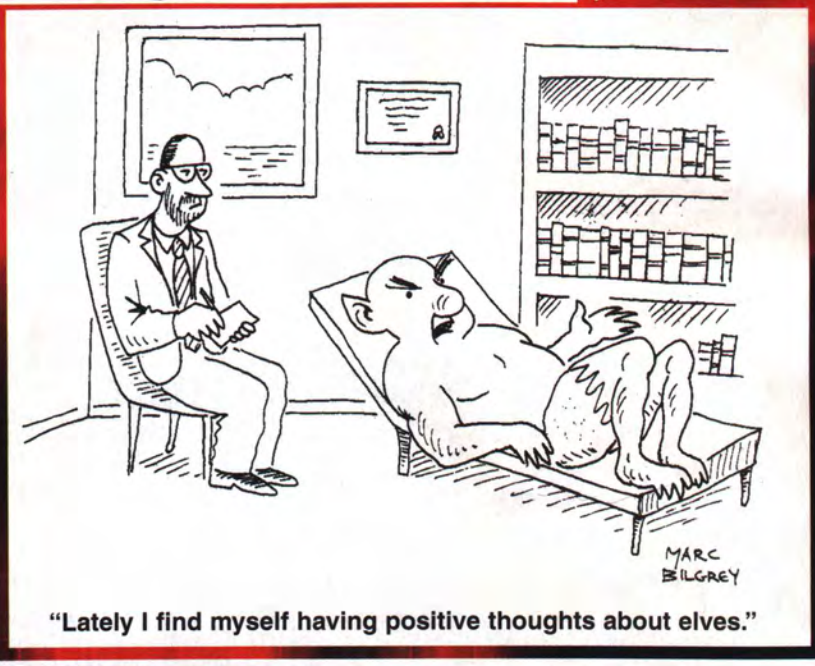

"Lately I find myself having positive thoughts about elves."

TONY MOSELEY

"Yeah, I see it all the time: flagon fear."

Congratulations to S. Ashley Cook from Valrico, Florida for her excellent entry. For that, we've scrounged the office for a groovy prize for her.

Don't forget to check out this month's contest on page 16.

RUNNER-UPS

"He's never been quite the same since falling for that 'pull my claw' gag."
Erik C. Day • Sioux Falls, SD

"I think he rolled a one on his combing skill check."
Tarra Austin • Wauconda, IL

"Oh, him? Let's just say he'll never turn his back on an angry unicorn ever again."
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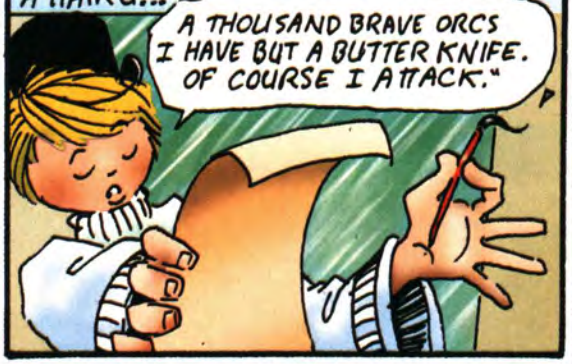
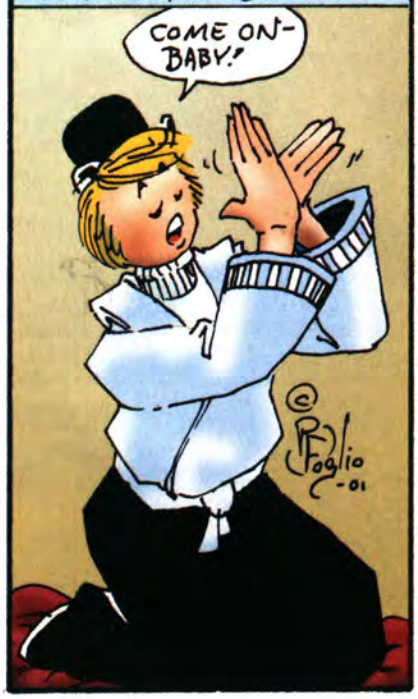


A SMALL OFFERING OF NACHO-CHEESE FLAVORED RICE IS PLACED BEFORE A SHRINE TO GARY GYGAX.

MEANWHILE, THE DM DONS THE TRADITIONAL SILK GLOVES AND PURIFIES THE DICE BY ANNOINTING THEM ONCE WITH DR. PEPPER, ONCE WITH CHEAP BEER, AND ONCE WITH BLACK COFFEE- A RECAPITULATION OF THE THREE STAGES OF A GAMER'S LIFE.

WHEN THE PLAYER HAS REACHED A STATE OF INNER VOID OR "NON LIFE," HE TAKES UP THE DICE AND, BY GENTLE MANIPULATION, ATTEMPTS TO APPEASE THE SPIRITS WITHIN THEM.



AT THE ASTROLOGICALLY CORRECT MOMENT, HE CASTS THE DICE-

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